



Thy Word is Truth

By

Jeffry David Camm

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my wife Rani, who has served as my helper and co-worker in God's service for the last nineteen years. It has not been easy for her to leave her beloved Pakistan, culture and family, and go out into the unknown world to serve the Lord, firstly in the Sultanate of Oman, then Australia, Thailand, back into Pakistan and now, back here in Australia.

Rani has been my constant travelling companion, as well as a loving and caring wife, under all sorts of difficult circumstances. It is with God's help that she has been able to do this.

During the nineteen years on the mission field, we have travelled to preach in more than 40 countries throughout the world, pioneering churches and have been blessed by God Almighty to see more than 15,000 people make commitments for Jesus Christ.

It is my desire that, in reading this book, you will feel a conviction to serve the Lord more and more in whichever area of the Lord's work, He has called you to become involved.

In serving your employer, work as if unto the Lord, who by His grace has provided the work for you to do. In all things remember to lift up the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whilst remaining a humble person yourself, not allowing pride or other worldly desires to cause you to move away from the divine grace of Jesus Christ which has been placed inside you for the betterment of all.

In all things, and in all situations, be a living example, worthy of the name of Jesus Christ, as you show His pure love to all those around you, both believers and unbelievers alike.

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FOREWORD

New Light Ministries & Consulting Services Pty. Ltd. are pleased to release the ninth book in the series by Rev. Jeffry David Camm, called:- **"Thy Word Is Truth"**.

Over the last twenty-five years in studying, teaching and preaching from God's Word I am amazed at all the wonderful truths and promises which are found in the Scriptures, but also surprised at how many people who claim to be Christians are not aware that these promises are available for them in their lives today.

The book contains a series of teachings/preaching I have undertaken during the last 15 years and I hope you are challenged by its contents.

In addition there are a series of prophetic words given to me by the Holy Spirit, which are of special importance in this time and in the circumstances we find ourselves, after the September 11th terrorist attacks.

I trust that as you examine these words and the teachings which follow that you will be challenged to once again do and audit of your own spiritual position with the Lord.

Are you in the correct place in your walk with Him? Are you doing the things He has asked you to do and are you doing them in the place He wants you to be? If so, are you doing them with all your might so that your actions glorify Him? These are only questions you (the reader) can answer. May God Almighty bless you all.

Prophetic Words from the Lord

2nd July 1992

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I have been studying the Scriptures over the last weeks and have been fascinated by a statement by John the Baptist, in his reference to Jesus and His Ministry here on earth. John says that he baptizes with water, as a sign of repentance, but that Jesus Christ shall baptize with the HOLY SPIRIT & WITH FIRE.

Now we all know the promise by God the Father, that the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, and that the Holy Spirit has been leading and guiding the church ever since that time. But John the Baptist, whom Jesus said was the greatest of all prophets, said that Jesus would also BAPTIZE WITH FIRE.

In all the books I have been able to get, I have yet to see a reference to Jesus "Baptizing with Fire" during His Ministry here on earth, so the reference by John, must have been about a later period of time in the Age of the Gentiles.

I have found that the references to fire in the old testament meant a time of purification, of the nation of Israel, (and of Sodom & Gomorrah, in a very dramatic way.) In the new testament it refers to the purification of the Bride of Christ, both in the collective sense, and the individual sense.

This must come as a prelude to the Lord's coming back for His chosen people, on the day of the resurrection of the first fruits of Christ.

On 1 July 1992, at 11 pm at night, the Lord gave me the following prophecy. I got out of bed and immediately recorded so it was fresh in my mind. I repeat it here in its entirety for your prayerful consideration and necessary action.

Thus sayeth the Lord: The time has come to prepare for a fast. The fast shall be remembered (taken part) across the face of the earth. The fast shall last for 7 days. The fast shall be to remember My people Israel and how I took them out of the land of Egypt. The Christians shall remember the Passover Feast and what it means to My people Israel (and what it means to the Gentiles who have become Christians).

You shall teach all of My people about the 40 years in the desert, why it had to happen, how it could have been avoided, how a generation of My people could have been saved, if only they had been obedient to MY Words & kept MY Commandments. You shall say to My people (church) : So shall it be to you also!!!

You - I have taken out of the land of Egypt (where you have been living in sin for generations.) I took you and changed you with the Blood of My Son. I made you white as snow. But even after this mighty miracle in your lives, you still refuse to listen to My voice and the voice of My Prophets.

Sound a general assembly, call a mighty gathering, let all the churches read from the temple gates the following proclamations : "I have called My people back to My Word. They shall eat it as honey in their mouths. Those who know it and understand it, shall flourish and it shall be as meat to them. For those who do not eat it, it shall become as a mighty whip which continues to follow them to their graves. Listen My people, the TIME OF PREPARATION IS NOW UPON YOU. I have never done anything to My people without first warning them through the Words of My Prophets. PREPARE YE FOR THE JUDGEMENT !!!

Your faces should be set towards Me and look towards Me continually. Let nothing distract you from your objective, as many trials and tribulations are to come upon you, to test your faith in Me. For those who remain steadfast and last the journey, I shall personally welcome into My city at the time to come. Encourage one another to make the Bride, pure, unified and strong. Do not be discouraged for I am with you, even until the end of the age."

11.30 pm 1.7.92

I thought about this commandment from the Lord for many minutes, trying to comprehend the magnitude of the task. I said : "Lord, how can I do this? There are countries in the world I have not been to. There are people and churches I don't know. How shall I accomplish your request?"

The Lord answered : "Contact the people you know, tell them about my message and have them pray about what I have said. I shall confirm in their hearts My Words to them and bring to their remembrance other people who they should also pass on My message too. In this way, I shall transfer My message from country to country across the face of the earth, and My commandment shall come to pass."

So I again prayed to the Lord, and I asked that He bring to my remembrance the names of persons that He, through the Holy Spirit, deems worthy for this task, and I shall send the information to them, so that they may pray and have confirmed in their individual hearts that the Word is from the Lord and act accordingly. In 1992 I was working in Pakistan as a consultant for the Telecommunications company Sumitomo Corporation of Japan and they were negotiating a contract with the Pakistan Government at that time. I received the following Word from the Lord and when I revealed it the management they did not believe it – but God knows better and they eventually signed a contract for this price (when extras were added in 12 months later)

8 July 1992 @ 01.30 a.m.

Thus says the Lord God of Abraham :

"Today I shall show you My power and that I control this nation, not the politicians and the crooked business people. The contract for the PTC BLT shall be awarded to you. You shall agree to do the work for US\$ 1035 per line, and in a time of 14 months. Because you have employed My servant I will bless you and protect you during the time of this project, so that the money shall not be wasted."

06.00 am on 20.1.93 in GRAND PALACE HOTEL, TOKYO, JAPAN

Thus sayeth the Lord : *"Beware of My Word and My judgements. I have said that there will be a twisting and a shaking of all the earth, to show the end is yet to come. Many people know about Me, but refuse to honour Me, or follow My paths and commandments. To prove that I AM the one and only God Almighty, who created the heavens and the earth in the beginning out of nothing, I shall shake this nation to its foundations and this city as it has never been shaken before."*

Those persons who hear My voice and leave Tokyo shall be saved. But those who hear My voice and ignore My warning shall be lost. I AM a just and merciful God. I give this nation 12 days notice, to allow you to prepare for this action. The earthquake shall measure 7.6 on the open ended Richter scale and many buildings shall be destroyed, many lives shall be lost. But all shall then know that I AM the Creator, the one and only true God, the Alpha and Omega, who was and is, and forever shall be, the only just God. You must pray for this nation, and Sumitomo Corporation, so that they will know and understand that I have sent you. FGBMI know Me and hear my voice. I will not punish the righteous with the wicked, if only they hear My voice and follow My commandments. Many people shall laugh at you, but have no fear, for My love will cover all of their laughter and taunting. My mercy endureth forever and covers a multitude of sins".

9th JUNE 1993, 01.00 AM

The Word of the Lord came to me saying :-

" Thus sayeth the Lord God of Abraham, the God of your fathers. The people who listen to my voice and obey my commandments shall prosper for I shall be with them. But the people who refuse to obey my commandments shall be punished. Do you think that you can hide the adultery in your heart and mind from Me ?

Don't you know that I examine even the hearts and thoughts of mankind to see if they are worthy of salvation? If you truly repent of your sins and turn your heart and face back to Me, then I shall again accept you into My bosom and shall care for you as a hen guards and protects its young chickens. But if you refuse to repent of your sins, then they shall lead to your destruction".

19 October, 1999

"My people have sinned a great sin, because they have allowed things of the world to become incorporated into their daily lives, until now it seems that they come from Me.

They have allowed My Word to be watered down and polluted, by removing anything from My Word which is not politically correct or relevant to this day and age and emphasising those parts of My Word which are pleasing to the ears of those who listen.

But they have forgotten that My Word is unchanging - it is for edification, exhortation and correction and to be used to continually remind My people that I AM a jealous God who guards His Word for eternity.

As it was written by the Prophets, I would come and suffer for you sins and be lifted up to the place which was prepared for Me before time began and that I would come again to take to Myself those people who are still worthy to be part of the bride - those people who have not let the things of this world pollute their clothes, who have kept the new cloth I gave to them when they accepted me as their Lord and Saviour clean and spotless, without blemish, guarding their salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that I, and I alone, will be the ultimate judge of both the pure and the ungodly.

Make a way, says the Lord. Prepare for the shaking and the trials which are soon to befall your nations. Be aware that these are not devices of the evil one, but trials sent by Me, with all My power, upon the face of the earth, to give warnings of the times which are to follow.

Remember My Words given in signs and wonders to My servant John and how the people had moved away from My true Word in those times and did things to please themselves.

Now My people have become a rebellious people. They refuse to listen to the prompting of My Holy Spirit, they turn away from their callings, they try to please people of this world, instead of pleasing Me. But still My mercy and grace covers them, for My love for them is great.

Wake up! says the Lord.. Look where you are going, recognise that the road you travel leads only to destruction. Turn aside and examine your motives, your goals and your aspirations. Return to Me, says the Lord.

Come once more and sit at My feet. Come once more and know and experience the tender love that I have ready to pour out to you all. Come again and have fellowship with Me. Come again, through the door and the way that I have already prepared for you.

Know that I AM telling you this because I love you and don't want any of you to be lost. Know that only with My love in your hearts, and with your eyes focussed fully upon Me will you be able to withstand the shaking and the sifting which is to come.

For those who listen, hear and understand these words of warning, and put them into practise in their daily lives, there will come great peace and blessing, in the knowledge that they are protected by My hands, spread out to cover them, as a hen covers and protects her young chickens.

Soon great fear and confusion will be upon the face of the earth. Many will try to hide their faces, or ignore what is happening, because to recognise it means they must acknowledge their sins and the impact of those sins upon their lives.

The time to turn back to Me is now. Do not wait until terror strikes the earth. Do not wait until this time of trial and tribulations come.

Turn back to Me now, says the Lord, and I will lift you up into My presence, into a new and closer relationship with Me. I will cause people to move in new areas of ministry, with signs and wonders, like has not been seen on earth in this generation. This will be as a warning to the believers, that the time of My return is soon to appear.

Do not listen to those who scoff and talk about the things which still have to be accomplished before My return. Remember, I made the heavens and the earth in six days, and I can complete all things ready for My return in an instant, if I choose to do so.

Remember I AM the Lord, the Almighty One, who sits upon the throne and who rules over the whole universe.

Gather My people together. Declare a time of prayer. Declare a time of fasting. Let them examine their hearts in My presence. Let them become aware of their wrongdoing, so that it can be brought before Me.

Know and remember that I have promised to forgive all sin which is brought before Me. Know and remember that I will cleanse those who want to become righteous and holy before Me. Know and remember that I will never refuse a repentant heart of those who love Me and want to be continually in My presence.

Tune your ears, says the Lord. Hearken unto My voice. Listen carefully to what the Holy Spirit says, as He speaks to each of you and draws you closer to Me.

Know and understand that I have chosen you and called you by name. Know and understand that I love you all and never want to see any of you fall away.

Know that this warning is to make you come to your senses and repent before Me - not to receive My punishment.

Test My word, says the Lord. See and prove for yourselves that what I say is true.

Open your eyes and look around you. Identify where you have gone astray. Acknowledge your shortcomings and know that I will forgive your sins.

I long for the day when I will have you all with Me on the earth and we can fellowship together in a new relationship, too great to be even imagined.

***LIFT UP YOUR VOICES, THE HOLY PROPHETS SAID.
SING PRAISES TO THE HEAVENS, REJOICE AND BE FED,
FOR THE LORD IS COMING, WITH THE CROWN UPON HIS HEAD.
THE LORD IS COMING, THE HOLY PROPHETS SAID.
THE LORD IS COMING WITH A CROWN UPON HIS HEAD.
ARE YOU READY FOR HIS COMING ???***

4th November 2001 07:53 am

"Oh My child, why have you forsaken Me? When you were but a baby, before you became a nation, I protected you, I provided for your food and for your well being. Your people roamed among the mountains and streams without fear and you told dreamtime stories to your children. There was peace in your land.

When the invaders came from over the seas they brought with them their own beliefs and customs and I still protected you as a place of security and peace. The people who came to live in you, built places to worship Me, to sing My praises and I blessed them so that they prospered and became a mighty nation. But as they grew up and grew in stature, they built other places to worship.

A place to worship the god of war, to proclaim that they are a mighty nation, able to defeat all who come against them. When they fought a fight for the sake of righteousness and justice, I protected them and gave them victory. But they did not give Me recognition or praise for their successes. They proclaimed that they did it themselves. Like the nation I set apart for Myself, they conquered Jericho with My help, then they went off to battle again, but not in My strength, My timing or My purpose, and they were defeated.

They have a sign on their coins "In God We Trust" but they have built towers to the god of money, to worship the power and the glory of money, not to praise or worship Me, the one who provides the materials which produce the crops or the intelligence to develop machines to manufacture goods.

They worship creation, not the one who created all this for them. They have turned their backs on Me and turned aside to worship other gods.

I have sent many messengers to tell them to turn from their wicked ways, but their hearts were hardened, their ears were closed, their eyes became dim – they would not see or listen.

But My word is unchanging, I AM a God of righteousness, I AM a God of Justice, I AM a jealous God, thou shalt have no other gods before Me. As was the case in times past, I have destroyed empires and buildings which did not bring glory and honour to Me. When I saw My people building a tower up to heaven, I saw that they were building a tower to glorify themselves, not to give glory and honour to Me. I sent down fire and lightning from Heaven and it was destroyed. In the confusion I changed their languages so that they no longer could communicate easily and had to go off in small groups to consider their lot and turn back and worship Me.

My people, I AM a God of mercy and peace. Why do you keep crying out for war? Why do you cry out in anger for revenge and vengeance, when you know that vengeance is Mine?

The time has come for you to look at yourself, look at your actions and look at your ways. I built you as a great nation, to show the world how I bless those who follow My ways and keep My commandments.

But you turned aside from Me. You watered down My word, you corrupted My children, you have brought My name into disrepute. I can raise you up or I can pull you down. I remind you of My word, which says :

If My children, who are called by My name shall humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land.

My word does not change, I will do all that I have promised, if you, My people, turn from your wicked ways and turn back to Me. I will comfort those who mourn, I will bring peace to those who suffer, I will bring justice to those who have been wronged and I will move to bring vengeance to those who have rained down terror upon My people. Fear not, for I AM the Lord who healeth thee, I AM the one who sends a cloud by day and a fire from heaven to guide you by night.

I sent My Holy Spirit to speak to all who will listen, to prompt those who believe in Me, who want to be obedient to My will and My purpose in their lives. I will bless all who take heed and listen to My words. I will protect them from sickness and I will prosper their lands, they shall not go hungry, nor shall they be saddened again.

Turn back to Me, for I have looked down and I see a nation in despair, a nation which needs to know Me once again, as a caring, loving Father. A Father who can give all the help needed to His children.

Letters whilst on the move

**Letter from Pakistan
19 March 1992**

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Well three months have nearly expired in this new year and I still have not got my first Newsletter out, to tell you all what is going on in the lives of the Camm's and how the Lord is blessing us with His love. Last year was a real test for Rani and myself, first with my broken back, this then followed by hepatitis, but through it all the Lord was constantly present and I am now happy to report that the Lord has restored me to health.

Last October, we participated in the first Four Square Church revival here in Gujranwala, Pakistan with wonderful results. Over 1500 people were in the tent when the meeting started and over 2,000 by the time the meeting finished three hours later. Many people were saved and healed of various diseases. Isn't God wonderful. This went on for four glorious days.

Because it appears that the Blessed HOLY SPIRIT is commencing to move in Pakistan, we earnestly asked all our friends throughout the world to lift up Pakistan in their prayers and in their churches. We had over fifty people in our house/church for our first Christmas service, in Pakistan. This was a real blessing, especially for Rani, who has worked so hard behind the scenes, over the last 10 years of our marriage and missionary work.

We have just returned from 2 months furlough in Australia, which was to attend my mother's 75th birthday celebrations. It was supposed to be a holiday, but I ended up teaching a women's fellowship group (in the Baptist Church) on relationships, taken out of the latest of my books - OUT OF DARKNESS.

In addition I was asked to speak to the men's group in the Uniting Church and told them of the subtle changes I perceived in Australia over the last 13 years since I have been out of the country, and how satan can slowly make inroads into the Christian community and destroy it from the inside.

During our stay in Australia, 9 women were ordained into the priesthood of the Church of England church, with its political and spiritual ramifications, as this was only achieved after several of the church priests took the matter to the high court, through the legal system, which of course is against the Word.

It is written that all matters should be solved inside the church itself.

We also took a trip out to the church in Moree which I helped to build (physically) immediately after I got saved in 1976 (mentioned in my book "ON THE POTTER'S WHEEL"). We were disappointed to find that the building now housed a funeral parlour, instead of the church. However, this disappointment soon turned to joy when we discovered that this was because the building became too small for the fast growing church which had moved to larger premises.

Over 65 families now attend this church, with regular services having anything up to 150 persons attending the church, with over 80 children in the "children's church", the majority of these also attending a local Christian school. There were several of the original church members still in the area and we had a wonderful few hours of fellowship as we told them of our work throughout the world and introduced Rani to them.

The church has had a stabilising effect on the local community and we pray the Lord will continue to bless the new minister as he continues to proclaim God's Word in this small community.

We have returned to Pakistan, but only for a short stop-over on our way to the UK. This will be followed by three months in Tanzania, travelling all over that country. I hope the Lord will open doors for me to share His Word there.

This will be followed by three months in Poland. Hopefully whilst I am there I can visit the churches over the border in Germany, where I have been invited to teach in a seminary, for one day each week. This has followed the use of OUT OF DARKNESS in Germany and being used as back-up material for a Pentecostal church study, on the seven churches in the book of revelations.

The new book SHOWERS OF BLESSINGS is coming along slowly, about 50 pages on the early life of Elijah have been typed and checked for spelling and grammatical errors. Now it is time to continue in the life of Elijah & his new companion Elisha, as they travel throughout Israel & Judah following the Lord's direction in their lives.

Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania,
April 1992

We are now in Tanzania and we have received a special blessing here. We are booked into the "Karibu Hotel" (which means welcome) not far from a Lutheran Church, whose members are filled with the Holy Spirit. They have a natural ability for praise and worship and sing like angels. The church has over 1,000 members.

The Easter celebrations were wonderful, seeing these people praising the Lord in Swahili. The praise books are written in the English text, but in phonetics, so we can sing along with them, isn't it wonderful, Praise the Lord. We should be here until the middle of June and are scheduled to fly out on the 13th June to the UK.

While I was here, I had a dream about a church in a place called "RUNNYMEDE". I don't know where this place is, not even the country, but I believe I am to go there and preach in their church. If you know where this place is, please let us know, so we can be obedient to the Lord.

I know each of you are following the path that the Lord has chosen for each of you. We pray for you all and expect great things to happen in your lives this year.

We were invited to attend the Lutheran Church for an all-night prayer meeting. During this time I was asked to teach the people present on "how to witness to Muslims". I trust that the Lord will use this information for His glory so that many more people can come into His Kingdom.

Well it is time to get on to work and other things. Please pray for Val, a missionary in Bangladesh, from the Baptist Church in Coffs Harbour, I feel that there is a large spiritual battle going on there. Prayer warriors all over the world need to join in and defeat satan in this country.

Love in Jesus' name,

PS. Remember Matt. 5:13.

If the salt is not any good anymore. the it shall be cast out, because it is of no further use to the Master of the house. Make sure that you are salt worth keeping.

Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania
12th May 1992

We have just returned to Dar-es-salaam, after travelling over 5,000 Kms in 2 weeks all over Tanzania. It has been a hectic trip, with holes in the roads that buses can disappear into. I have never seen roads as bad as these before. (The locals say they have improved from what they used to be. I am glad I was not here then.)

We have received a letter from MUM which included your letter to her. It is good to hear from you and to know that you are back in Thailand, although we are concerned about the possibility of riots there. We wish to thank you for the hospitality of your house and your family whilst I was ill. I really do appreciate it and I know that the Lord will bless you mightily for your hospitality.

We wish we had the time to come and visit with you in Thailand, but don't know when it will be. You have mentioned in your letter that there is a drought in Thailand at present. Do you remember that I saw that vision of the major droughts which were to come in that nation, with even people dying of starvation. You need to prepare the church for what is to come, as this could be the beginning of a drought like none that Thailand has ever experienced before. At the end of it the persecution will come to the churches.

We should arrive in the UK by the time you receive this letter and then Rani will go back to Pakistan and I will (HOPEFULLY) continue on into Poland for some time. If that is the case I would like to cross the border one weekend to see all the saints of the German churches. I don't know my exact itinerary yet but if you call the above numbers towards the end of May they should be able to tell you when I shall arrive in the UK, or in Poland, or in Pakistan, as the Lord wills.

Phil, a theological question for you: When Elisha commanded that all the false prophets of BAAL & the false prophets of ASHERAB were to come to the mountain to prove who was the REAL GOD. Why did not Elisha command that the false prophets of ASHERAB be also slain as false prophets, as defined in the Scriptures ???

Love in Jesus' name,

Pakistan
23rd July 1992

The Church - A Change In Direction

Since the time of the Old Testament Prophets, God Almighty has been calling His people back to Himself, through the words, signs and deeds of His Prophets.

We know from the Scriptures that the people of Israel were a "stiff necked people". They did not want to continually follow the Words of the Lord.

Their attitude to the God who took them out of Egypt was that He was an army general, their understanding of God Almighty (Yahweh), was of a person who must be obeyed at all times, or suffer the consequences.

This was only one of the Faces of God Almighty. They did not understand and recognize that He has many other faces.

This is why their sacrifices and worship was not acceptable to Him, in some cases, because of their inward sins of the heart, and their disobedience, as a nation to follow the words of the prophets.

John the Baptist came to the nation of Israel, with a new message. It focused on a new relationship with the God. John started to teach the people around him that each individual was as precious to God as the whole nation of Israel. Each individual's sins were an abomination before the Lord, just as much as those of the nation of Israel as a whole. It was preparing the Way for His coming onto the earth, in physical form, as Jesus Christ.

When Jesus Christ was asked by His disciples about John the Baptist, He answered with these words:

"What did you go out in the wilderness (desert) to see? A reed blowing in the wind? "What did you go out to see then? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in the house of kings. (Tell me) what did you (really) go out to see? A Prophet? Yes, I tell you and one (out of the ordinary, an extra ordinary prophet) more eminent, more remarkable and superior to any other prophet before him.

This is one of whom it is written. Behold I send My messenger (Elias) on ahead of You, who shall make ready your Way before You. Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist, yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

We have learnt to weigh heavily on the Words of our Lord in the Scriptures. But sometimes we fail to understand (or miss) the significance of some of the words He spoke to His disciples, or to the crowds round about Him. If I asked you, as a congregation, to identify the most important prophet of the Old Testament times, I am sure that I would receive many names of mighty prophets. They would probably include : Abraham, Moses, Noah, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, David, just to name a few of them. I would be very surprised if anyone would offer up the name of John the Baptist, as the most important prophet of the Old Testament.

But indeed he is. Why do I say this? Because in the eyes of God, he was the most important, and Jesus Christ confirmed it in His own words.

If we look at the other prophets I have named, we can identify special things that they did, from the Scriptures under obedience to the Lord.

For instance **Abraham**, - he left his house freely under the commandment of the Lord, to go to a place that the Lord had chosen. His obedience was judged as righteousness.

Moses was chosen by God in the desert, to go back into Egypt, to free the Jewish people, at the end of the 400 years of slavery, as promised in the prophecy to Joseph.

Noah, cried out to God about the sin of the people and why God would not listen to him. God protected Noah for his righteousness sake and destroyed the whole of creation which was in sin and started afresh.

Elijah commanded the skies to cease sending rain and for three and a half years, there was no rain upon the earth.

Elisha prayed to the Lord to save the Shunamite woman's son and he was revived and went on living for many years.

David prayed for the salvation of the Jews and from his seed came the Branch, the root of Jesse, which was Jesus Christ the Lord.

So you say, we know all of these things. What is so special about them?

Each one of these special stories have been recorded under the power of the Holy Spirit by the writers of the Scriptures, over many centuries.

But we don't have one record of any miracles, or predictions that John the Baptist made, which would make him more special, in the eyes of God, than all of the prophets mentioned above, or do we?

If Jesus Christ considers he is very special, then we should examine his life, and his teachings very closely, because Jesus built upon them, as John came to prepare the way for Christ.

As a builder constructs a house upon solid foundations, so Jesus Christ presented His teachings upon the foundations prepared by John the Baptist. So what were these teachings and how have we missed them so easily in the past.

John the Baptist came to change an individual's heart and attitude towards God.

Prior to this, the prophets had been directing their attention at the "Nation of Israel" as a whole. [If the nation turned away from its sinful nature, then God would bless the nation], etc., etc..

But now, John the Baptist was identifying sin, on a personal level. EACH PERSON WAS NOW ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR INDIVIDUAL SINS.

This was something new. More so was the teaching that each individual had to individually repent of their sins, and then - as proof of their repentance they were to bear fruit worthy of repentance.

No longer was God Almighty a collective being, associated with the collective nation of Israel. John the Baptist made people aware that they were individually accountable to God Almighty for their sins, and that they, as individuals, could be punished for them.

John brought people to a point where they were made consciously aware of their sins and the penalty for them being death. This was later confirmed by Paul in Romans 6:23.

John also prepared the people for the coming of the Messiah, through, Who, by grace, (by a free gift from God the Father), we may be saved, through His death on the cross, His victory over death, and His resurrection to everlasting life, as the first fruits of the resurrection.

John prophesied that he baptized with water, but that Jesus would baptize with the HOLY SPIRIT & WITH FIRE.

Now many books have been written about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and what an impact it has on the life of every Christian. But what about the BAPTISM OF FIRE ? WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

If John was the greatest of all the prophets, and we have seen the evidence of people being baptized with the Holy Spirit, when can we expect the BAPTISM OF FIRE TO COMMENCE ???

Has it happened already ?

What will happen to those people who are effected by it?

When a storm is in the area where I live in Australia, it is quite common for lightning to strike a tree and set the surrounding bush on fire.

The fire races through the forest, burning everything in its path, without fear or favour, everything gets burned.

Shortly after, maybe one or two weeks later, the forest will start to sprout new growth from among the trees which had previously been consumed in the fire. BUT NOT ALL THE TREES WILL START TO BLOOM AGAIN. SOME WILL BE DEAD FOR EVER.

When you go into a jeweller's shop he has a small fire in which he melts the copper, the tin and mixes them together to make a new metal - (Brass). He also uses fire to purify the silver and gold, to take all the impurities out of it. Only when the impurities are removed can he then start to make the wonderful pieces of jewellery worn by many women today.

THE BAPTISM OF FIRE, THAT JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS TALKING ABOUT – HAS THE SAME IN CLEANSING AND PURIFYING FUNCTION.

As the Holy Spirit has come and has spread across the world, causing revival in old churches, creation of and salvation in new churches, making the people take the church, out of its ivory towers, and into the streets, just like in the first century churches, so a major change is about to occur, when the BAPTISM OF FIRE COMES.

It is the responsibility of pastors around the world today, to identify what the BAPTISM OF FIRE is - what is its function and to start to prepare the church for its coming.

Jesus did not send the Holy Spirit to the disciples un-announced. He commanded them to wait in Jerusalem, until the "promise from the Father shall arrive".

Because of their obedience to His words, the Holy Spirit came down upon them.

The BAPTISM OF FIRE will come. It may come like the bolt of lightning, or it might come in some other way, that is not clear to me. But in faith I know that God will honour His word and send the fire down upon us.

The fire shall consume both the believer and non-believer alike. Everyone in its path shall be affected.

For the believer, it shall be a refining fire, a cleansing of all sins, those special sins which have been secretly hidden away from the eyes of the family, the eyes of the other church members, but not hidden away from the eyes of the Lord.

The fire of the Lord could also be a series of testings and trials, to put your faith to the test, to make you rely completely upon the Lord, instead of upon your pastor, your financial stability, your family or your intellectual abilities.

This shall be necessary, so that the Lord can start and finish the task of preparing His bride for the wedding feast.

Hebrews 6:1-3 says that we should press on to the finish, to become like Christ, but only if God shall permit.

Like the trees after the fire, new shoots spring forth from among the ashes, (if God permits them to continue living) so shall the individual Christians spring forth with new levels of faith.

This is essential for us to reach the same level of understanding, the same level of faith and complete unity in the Body of Christ, all things which are stated further along in Hebrews chapter 6.

This may not happen in our lifetime, but it will never happen if Christians don't commence to claim this Scripture as a promise of God for the Body of Christ.

I am sure many people are afraid of the Baptism of Fire because it shall finally make them make a stand for Christ. All the unnecessary parts of the Flesh Body shall be stripped away and leaving a purified physical and spiritual body.

This is all necessary before the promise of the Lord's prayer can be fulfilled. --- "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it [already is] in Heaven.

25th April 1993

Go Ye And Witness To All Generations – INCLUDING [Witnessing to Muslims]

The Scriptures clearly tell us to "go to the ends of the earth and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ." This is in fact a commandment from God, because Jesus Christ spoke the words Himself, as recorded in Mark 16 :15-16. ***"And He (Jesus Christ) said to them: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptised shall be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."***

Satan knows that Jesus Christ has given this commandment to his disciples, and that they have been very obedient in preaching God's Word throughout the last 1900 years. However Satan wants to keep as many of the people on earth in his clutches, (under the control and dominion of sin) so as to disprove the claim in Heaven, that Jesus Christ is in control of the universe.

To help him achieve this, satan has raised up a false religion, known today as Islam. Many people in the world today have an emptiness within their heart and are drawn to this false religion, because it seems to meet their needs and fill this emptiness. Be aware that today the followers of Islam have missionaries going about in various countries trying to convert people to follow after this religion.

Unfortunately I have to tell you that their missionaries are converting people to Islam, quicker than Christians can preach the true word about Jesus Christ. This religion is a force for evil, not for the Lord. Be warned that when you go out to witness to people who believe in Islam, that you are going out to do battle against satan and his principalities and powers.

The people are told only a part of the truth about God. This is the way that satan works. Remember when satan was in the Garden with Adam & Eve? Satan told Eve 99% of the truth about what God Almighty said. It was the 1% lies which caused Eve to sin and for sin to enter the world.

The Quran tells many things about God the Father, about the Prophets, about Jesus Christ, His early life, His ability to work miracles, even His ability to raise people from the dead. The Quran predicts how Jesus Christ will die, but unfortunately the Muslim teachers, (mullahs) do not tell their people this truth. The Quran says that Jesus Christ shall be "raised up to die" clearly a reference to the cross and the crucifixion] "and then be raised up to Heaven and to glory." The Muslims believe that Jesus Christ shall be the one to come back (yes the second coming of Jesus Christ) to judge them. His decision shall decide their fate for eternity.

With all these wonderful truths about Jesus Christ, you wonder why it is a false religion? Well, without salvation, all people are still wallowing in their sins. Satan leaves out the one special truth in the Quran, that makes us, as Christians, who believe the Bible, different from all other religions.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he came down from Heaven, as described in Philippians 2:6-11 and that by His sacrifice, as the second Adam, (a man without sin) we shall be able to come into the presence of God Almighty, as part of the bride of Christ. Through this sacrifice, we can have SALVATION.

People who follow Islam do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If you try to tell them this, they will switch you off and any further efforts to witness to them will be wasted.

The secret in witnessing to Muslims, which we have found works in several countries, is to build on the truths that the Muslims already believe. Once you realize this, the Holy Spirit will give you the confidence, to continue on breaking new spiritual ground with them. Before you even go out to witness, we recommend the following steps:

1. Prepare to witness.

Refer to Ephesians chapter 6:10-20. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. The Word says : BE STRONG IN THE LORD. This means that people can ALSO be WEAK IN THE LORD.

How can one become STRONG IN THE LORD ?

a) Hosea 4:6 is the answer :

"My people are destroyed (by satan) for lack of Knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge; I reject you from being a priest to me." Remember we are supposed to be a royal priesthood. We must know and understand God's Holy Word. We must not only know and understand it, but also practise God's Word in our lives. The Scriptures tell us that we must be "doers of God's Word, not hearers only." To be able to achieve this, we must tap into the POWER OF HIS MIGHT.

The Scriptures tell us that we shall receive POWER WHEN THE HOLY GHOST COMES UPON YOU. With the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was able to perform His miracles. He was able to withstand the temptations of the devil. We must realise, that we are not superior to Jesus Christ. We cannot go out to battle against satan, unless we are equipped with the same weapons that Jesus had and used. Having the Holy Spirit in a believer's life, is essential for effective witnessing.

In my book "THE GIFTS, ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT" these parts of the Holy Word are explained in detail. A copy of this book, is available, for future teaching.¹

b) Put on the whole armour of God, (so) that you may be able to stand against the wiles (tricks and lies) of the devil."

You must be well armoured before you go out to battle against the army of satan. Ephesians 6 10-20 tells you have to equip yourself for this battle. When you encounter a person you think is a Muslim, I suggest you follow the steps outlined below :

2. Ask the person if he is a Muslim.

If he/she answers "YES", ask them whether they are followers of the Mullahs, or followers of the Book (the Quran). This usually causes confusion, because they think that this is the same thing. It is definitely not. Many Mullahs teach things which are not in the Quran. For example, they teach their followers to hate the Christians and the Jews, whilst the Quran says that it is OK to eat in the house of a Jew, (because the food is Kosher) and it is OK to sleep in the house of a Christian. It seems illogical that a person would be OK to sleep in the house of his enemy, a person he is told to hate by his mullah teacher. By asking this type of question you will now have their undivided attention.

3. Ask them if they understand the Quran when they read it?

Do they faithfully obey the instructions written in the Quran, in their daily lives? Most of them will say that they do. Proverbs 6 verse 2, says that you are trapped by the words of your own mouth. They say that they follow the instructions in the Quran. Now it is time to test them, to see if they really do this.

4. The Quran says these wonderful words : "Obey Allah [God] and follow Jesus".

Muslims believe that the Quran was given as a divine revelation from God Almighty to Mohammed. They believe that everything in this book, is a direct commandment from God Himself. Here, in the Quran is a

¹ Copies of *The Gifts, Administrations and Offices of the Holy Spirit* maybe obtained from : nlmcs@optusnet.com.au

direct commandment from God, telling them to fear God and follow Jesus Christ, not follow Mohammed. When you tell them this, most of them will deny that this instruction is indeed in the Quran. But it is in fact very clearly stated. When you quote the actual text reference to them, they will be very puzzled and will go and look it up, if they have a Quran available. So you can say to them: See! you told me that you follow what is written in the Quran, but when I quoted the first Scripture to you, you even denied of its existence in your Quran. Maybe there are other Scriptures that you are not obeying also.

5. **The Covenant made between God the Father and Abraham.** The Scriptures in the Bible clearly indicate that this was a blood covenant, made between God Almighty, on the one hand, and Abraham, (representing mankind) on the other hand. When this covenant was made, satan did not believe that man would live up to his side of the bargain. The Muslims believe that Abraham took ISHMAEL up the mountain, not ISAAC. However they will agree that this was a test of faith that God was giving to Abraham - that he had to obey God and prove that his love for God Almighty, was greater than his love for his son. We know that a prophecy was given by Abraham, when his son asked him where was the sacrifice. Refer Genesis 22:7.

Gen.22:8"And Abraham said: My son, God will provide himself, a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together."

When Abraham got to the top of the mountain, he prepared the altar, as per the instructions of the Lord. Then he took his son and placed him on the altar, took his knife and raised it to plunge it into his son, whom he loved. In doing this, all of Heaven saw that Abraham was prepared to offer his own son, as a sacrifice, in obedience to the commandment of the Lord. It was only the intervention of the Angel of the Lord, which prevented Abraham from actually killing his son. So mankind kept their part of the of the covenant. God was now required to sacrifice his Son for mankind. This is why Jesus came to earth. Muslims can understand this type of logic for why Jesus came.

6. **The Judgement of Mankind.**

Muslims, like Christians, believe that God shall judge mankind. Muslims believe that the judgement shall be on works or deeds, not through the salvation of Jesus Christ. Irrespective of this we can still build on things that they believe, and come back to correct this untruth. Muslims believe that JESUS CHRIST shall be the one to judge them at the end-time. They believe that His decision shall be a life or death decision on their lives. Either they shall live in Heaven (Paradise) for eternity, or they shall live in hell for ever. We are able to use this belief to raise questions in their hearts, and awaken their spirits to the truth of God's Word.

- 6.1 Out of all the prophets that God Almighty sent to the earth, to lead, guide and chide His chosen people, why is it that God Almighty chose Jesus Christ as the one to judge all of mankind? Why Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ was the only person, who was born without inherited sin in his life. His Father was not a descendant of Adam. Jesus Christ was **"born free of sin"**. Muslims believe in the miraculous birth of Christ, so this explanation they agree with.
- 6.2 You then start to indicate confusion. You say to the Muslim: "You believe that Jesus Christ will decide whether you live forever, or die forever. Is that right?" They will think about this for a while, but finally agree that this is in fact is what they believe.
- 6.3 But you answer: "I thought that only God could make a decision, whether you lived or died." They will agree that this is true. If that is the case, THEN JESUS CHRIST MUST BE GOD !!! Up until this point, the Muslim has believed 2 pieces of the truth. But these 2 pieces have never been brought together before. The first part: that Jesus Christ shall judge them at the "end-time" and that His decision alone shall decide their future for eternity. There is no court of appeal. The second part: that only God can decide whether you live or die. You are then able to say that because of these two separate truths, Jesus Christ must be the Son of God. Up until now, they have always been told by their mullah that Jesus Christ was a prophet. He was not the Son of God. But you have now proved, with their own beliefs, that He is the Son of God.

If Jesus Christ is to judge you (the Muslim), what rules is He going to use? Do you know? You can tell the Muslim that the Bible clearly tells what rules Jesus Christ shall use to judge mankind. You could even suggest that they read the Bible to find out for themselves and prepare themselves for the end-time. This causes the Muslim to re-examine his beliefs. But already you have placed a truth in his heart. The Holy Spirit will do the rest. You have planted the very seeds that will cause the Muslim to question his belief. Once the seeds are planted, the Holy Spirit will do the watering.

Pray for the Lord to put Christians and circumstances into the Muslims' path, so that the Holy Spirit can draw the Muslim to the truth of God's Holy Word. Once that happens, the Muslim will want to be obedient to God's Word. They become very strong Christians, and very strong witnesses among their own people.

June 4, 1995

Pentecost Sunday

I bring you greetings from the Saints in Australia, Israel and especially from the saints in Dorsten in Germany, where there are more than 20 Thai Christians women worshipping in a BFP Evangelical Church.

Today we come to celebrate the special day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down upon the people gathered in Jerusalem. Many people believe that the feast of Pentecost is a "Christian Feast", but this is not the case. The origin of the feast of Pentecost goes back to the early Jewish history and today I want to spend time on the origin of the Feast of Pentecost, so that you better understand its Christian significance.

In the book of Exodus, Chapter 34, Moses commands the Jewish nation to keep three "pilgrim feasts". These feasts have three significant parts.

Part 1. Agricultural timing;

Part 2. Historical Timing;

Part 3. Religious significance;

Feast No. 1. was **the Feast of Passover**, which is held in the spring and is the first fruits of the barley harvest. This is commemorated on the 14 day of the first month of the new year (Nisan) and is when the Jewish nation came out of Egypt. This is to remember that the **angel of death passed over the doorposts of every family which had blood placed on them.**

Feast No.2 was the "**FEAST OF THE WEEKS**", which was held 50 days after Passover, (commonly called the second chapter of Passover) and is in the summer. At this time the Jewish Nation collects the harvest of the wheat, the largest harvest for the nation, on which they will have to live for the remainder of the year.

So we know the agricultural significance of the feast, Summer and the harvest of the wheat. The historical significance of this feast is that this is when Moses came down from the mountain with the 10 commandments inscribed in stone – (the first time), only to find that the nation had built a golden calf and had gone after other gods - to worship them.

The religious significance is that Moses destroyed this set of tablets, so that the nation would not be destroyed for their terrible sin.

This feast gets its name Pentecost from the Greek word meaning 50.

Feast No.3 is the **feast of Tabernacles**, held in the autumn, when the Jewish nation collects that last of the harvest, (the in-gathering).

Now that we know about these feasts, we must also understand that the Jews were commanded to come up to Jerusalem, to the temple on pilgrimage, at least to keep these three feasts each year, and to bring their temple offerings, as laid down in the Torah, the first 5 books of the Bible.

If we take time to study the times that Jesus was in Jerusalem, you will find that Jesus kept these pilgrimage feasts, (as a Jew) during the time of His ministry of three years.

It is also important to remember that Jesus came to Jerusalem, this last time, to celebrate the Passover feast, at which time He was arrested, tried, sentenced to death and arose again. We must remember that the Passover feast is the celebration of **the harvest of the first fruits**.

We often say that Jesus is the **first fruits of the resurrection**. This had a very important meaning to the early Jews who became Christians and we should also recognize its significance today.

At Pentecost the Jews celebrate their major harvest for the year. It is therefore not surprising that when the Holy Spirit and Fire came down upon the 120 in the upper room, that God Almighty was going to commence the **main harvest of His chosen people**, to be part of the Bride, as promised in the Prophets and told by Jesus Himself.

We know that on the first Pentecost at Mt. Sinai, 3,000 people died because of their rebellion against God. At the first Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven, 3,000 people accepted the promise of eternal life, through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. These two events are linked, as are all the events in the Bible.

As Christians, growing up without the ability to read Hebrew, not completely understanding the culture and history of the Jewish nation, we often miss the special jewels that the Lord has provided for us in the Scriptures.

As we remember the thousands of Jewish people who were in Jerusalem at that time, to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, who heard the good news of the Messiah from Peter, the explanation of the promise of Joel 2:28, "that afterwards the Holy Spirit would come", we can better understand their joy and easy acceptance of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Today let us also praise God, that His Holy Spirit is amongst us, right here in Thailand, for all to receive, as was promised by the Prophets, so that we (the sons and daughters of the promise) can prophecy, that the old men shall have dreams, and the young men shall have visions.

We need all of these things so that the Holy Spirit can lead us into all truth, as was promised in John 14:26.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"

The promise of the Holy Spirit is to everyone, even to those who are afar off. The Holy Spirit is essential in our lives, to allow us to grow into spiritually mature Christians, being able to fight off the wiles and temptations of the evil one. If you have not had the Holy Spirit manifested in your life, then you need prayer to receive it today.

Remember that it is promised to all people as defined in Acts 2:38, who have :-

- Repented of their sins and have made a conscious decision to change their sinful ways and follow Jesus Christ.
- Been baptized in water, as a public witness of their commitment to change their sinful lifestyle, and to be obedient to God's Word.
- These people **shall receive the Holy Ghost**. (no option given in this Scripture).

Let us come together now in prayer, asking the Lord to fill to overflowing, all those people who desire to walk a closer walk with Jesus Christ, who wish to be used by Him as vessels for His service, to witness to this generation in this land, or in whichever land the Lord chooses to send us.

Attitan. (Let us Pray)

Heavenly Father, we come before your throne of grace this day, rejoicing in the knowledge that you always remember the promises you have made to your chosen people, Israel, and to those who have been grafted into the vine through the blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We ask that you pour out your Holy Spirit on this your people, this day, so that they may become acceptable vessels, to be used in your service. Continue to teach us, oh Lord, so that we can be ever more obedient to your word and your requirements of us.

We ask that you do these things so that your name can be glorified and that your name is lifted higher than any other name in this land.

NAY PRA NAM PRA YESU PRA CHAO. (In the name of Jesus our Lord)

AMEN.

God Likes Righteous People

The Scriptures show us in many places that Jesus loved and respected righteous people and poured out the blessings of Heaven upon them.

1. **Abram was obedient to God's calling on his life** and God judged his faith as righteousness and promised that all the nations of the earth would be blessed as a result of him.
2. **Noah cried out to the people, to repent from their wicked ways** and Jesus found him to be worthy of salvation, both him, his wife, his three sons and their wives.

In the New Testament there are also several cases where Jesus recognised the righteous man and rewarded him for it. Let us look at just a few of them this morning and see if we can learn from their experiences.

In Matt. 8:5-9, it says: *When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him asking for help. "Lord" he said, "my servant lies at home paralysed, and in terrible suffering". Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him." The centurion replied. "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof, but say the word and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one "GO" and he goes; and that one "COME" and he comes. I say to my servant "DO THIS" and he does it.*

Jesus went on to explain that he had not seen faith like this in any person who belonged to the nation of Israel. Here was an outsider, a gentile, who was clearly professing his faith in Jesus Christ and in the belief that Jesus could heal his servant. Jesus went on to explain that there would be many who would sit in Heaven with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but also there would be many who thought they belonged to the selected nation, who would not be accepted in the last days, because their faith and righteousness were not acceptable to Him.

In Acts Chapter 10, we see another centurion, another gentile get God's attention because of his righteousness.

"At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon, he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said. "Cornelius !" Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it Lord ?" The angel answered : "Your prayers and gifts have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back Simon, who is called Peter. He is staying in the house of Simon, the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

Now we know that Simon Peter came to the house, as a result of the obedience of Cornelius to send the men to Joppa, as instructed by the Angel of the Lord.

As a result all the people assembled in his house heard the Word of God, the revelation of Jesus Christ and each of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Peter even said to the men who accompanied him, that all the people in the house should be baptised, because the Lord has also put the Holy Spirit upon their heads, just the same as it happened to the Jews in Jerusalem.

What we can see from these incidents recounted in the Scriptures, is that righteous people get God's attention, and God honours their righteousness.

In James chapter 5:16 it says : **"Therefore confess your sins to each other, and pray for each other, so that you may be healed. THE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN IS POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE."**

I am sure that all of us want our prayers to be powerful and effective, so that they are answered by God. If we didn't, it would be a waste of time praying at all. This morning I want to look at one other story in the Scriptures and see what the Scriptures tell us, not what we have been told in the past, or have assumed by jumping to wrong conclusions.

In John chapter 4 we are told the story of the Samaritan woman, another gentile. I have heard several pastors recount this story and tell their congregations that the woman was of loose morals and that this story should not even be in the bible.

Rule No. 1 : God has never put anything in the Bible, which is not for our edification, exhortation, correction, or comfort.

In Verse 4 it states that Jesus HAD TO GO THROUGH SAMARIA. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus never did anything on His own initiative - but He did what the Father in Heaven told Him to do. Jesus had to go to Samaria, because God the Father told him to - someone in Samaria had got God's attention.

When Jesus arrives at Jacob's well, it is about midday and very hot. Jesus sends the disciples off into the town to find food, so He can talk to the woman alone, for He knows that she is coming to the well to draw water.

When Jesus asks her for a drink she is surprised because it was well known at that time there was great hatred and fighting between the Jews and the Samaritans.

After some questioning about the water of the well and the everlasting water that Jesus can offer, Jesus instructs this Samaritan woman to go and get her husband. The woman truthfully replies that she has no husband - she is in fact a widow. Jesus tells her that she has answered correctly. She has in fact had 5 husbands and the person she is presently living with is not her husband either.

All through the Bible, Jesus confronts sin and sickness whenever He comes upon it and He deals with it. Jesus said I come to save all that are lost and all that are afflicted by the devil. Yet in this story, Jesus does not condemn this woman as being a sinner, when she says that she has no husband. Why ? Because He knew the **truth** about her situation. He knew that she had suffered much heartache, because she had suffered the tragedy of living with five husbands, each of them dying, possibly in battle, or in sickness. That after each tragic death there would be at least a year of mourning, before the family would arrange the next marriage.

This woman would have been at least 50 years of age and her plight would be well known in the village where she was now living with a relative of the last husband, who has just died. When this information was revealed to the woman, by Jesus, she perceived Him as a Prophet.

This gave her an opportunity to ask a question which had been troubling her for some time. Where was the correct place to worship. Jesus answered her in a special way in verse 22: ***"You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we (Jews) worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is Spirit and his worshippers must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth."***

The woman told Jesus that she knew that the Messiah, called Christ was coming, and that He would explain all things to them. Here was the confession of a righteous woman - a person who believed in the God of Abraham - a person who was crying out for the revelation of truth, so that her life could be changed and made completely new. Jesus then reveals His true identity to her.

When Jesus tells her his real identity, she forgets her water pot, her prized possession, and runs to the village gate, to the village elders to tell them the good news - that maybe the Messiah had come.

If she was a prostitute, as many people tell you, the village elders would have stoned her. They would not have listened to her at all. But they listened to her, because they knew who she was. They respected her because they knew that she was a devout woman, a righteous woman, and they came to the well to see this man for themselves.

In verse 39 it says that many believed because of her testimony. We know that satan is defeated by the words of our testimony - when Jesus is at work in us, satan is defeated in the lives of others. Others believed because of the words of Jesus Himself as he stayed and taught them for some time.

This is a special piece of Scripture, because it clearly shows that Jesus preached to the Gentiles before His crucifixion and many people believed who He was and followed Him. It is no co-incidence that Jesus told the disciples, just before His ascension that they would be filled with the Holy Spirit and would then commence to witness about Him throughout all nations.

He said in Acts 1:8 :- ***"BUT YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES ON YOU; AND YOU WILL BY MY WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH."***

Jesus specifically told His disciples to go to Samaria and confirm to them what had happened, so that the believers there would continue to follow the truth that had been revealed to them, when Jesus went there to preach the truth to them earlier.

- The Scripture says in Hebrews 2:11 that:- ***"Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers."*** and we should rejoice and shout it from the rooftops.
- The Scripture says in Romans 1:16 that :- ***"I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; first for the Jews and then for the Gentiles."***
- Today, we need to be righteous people, who get God's attention, because we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we are seen to be living proof of its teachings.
- Today, we need to be people who are recognised and respected, because of our lifestyles, and by our righteousness and faith in God Almighty.
- Today, we need to be a people who are able to experience that same feeling of joy and trust, that the early disciples experienced, when they walked side by side with Jesus.
- Today, in this generation, we need to be seen as a "peculiar people", a group of people who do not confirm to the issues and doctrines of this world - a people who live out their lives in the society, helping one another, whether they be Christians or not, because we love them with a special kind of love the world does not know or understand.

- If you don't feel like that today, then it is clear from the Scriptures, that you are not living a righteous life - in God's eyes (not mine).

You need to do some soul searching and confess your wrongdoings before the throne room of grace, knowing that Jesus loves us, while we are yet still sinners, and that by His blood we can be washed completely clean of all unrighteousness and be brought into a renewed and wonderful relationship with Jesus Christ.

As we close this service today I would encourage everyone of us to examine our hearts carefully, unlock all the secret compartments of hurt and shame and to lay our whole life before Jesus Christ for His examination.

Only then, can He deal with our individual problems and make us one of His beloved righteous ones, whom He is not ashamed to call His brother or sister.

Let us pray.

19/01/97

Jewish Festivals

It has been shown that people of the Western society sometimes miss significant teachings and meanings from the Holy Scriptures, because they do not understand the culture, heritage, or history of the Jewish people. The Lord proclaimed to Moses the Holy feasts which must be observed by the Nation of Israel in the following references: Lev. chapter 23, and Duet. 16:1-17. There are 4 types of feasts.

1. **Pilgrim feasts**
2. **Penitential feasts**
3. **Miscellaneous feasts (weddings, births, deaths, etc.)**
4. **Sabbath feast**

There are 3 pilgrim feasts which are mandatory for all Jews. These are :-

- a) The Feast of the Passover
- b) The Feast of Weeks, held 50 days after Passover (Pentecost)
- c) The Feast of Tabernacles

Each of the feasts have three significant meanings for the Jewish people, and when we understand these things, they have major spiritual importance for us, as Christians also. Jesus made it quite clear that He came not to abolish the Law, but to fulfil the Law. Jesus was a Jew who fulfilled the Law and participated in each of these feasts. Because of this fact, it is important for Christians to understand their meaning, so we can get a better understanding of their significance to us as Christians.

Each feast has the following significant references :

- Agricultural
- Historic
- Theological

1. PASSOVER

a) Agricultural significance

In the month of Abib (Spring), the Passover Feast is to celebrate the first fruits of the barley harvest. The Jews brought an Omer (sheaf) of barley to the Temple for thanksgiving.

b) Historical significance

400 years of Egyptian slavery - then Moses and a new process of redemption begins - take a lamb and put the blood on the doorposts and the "angel of death" will PASSOVER your house. Then on the 15th day of Nisan (the march commences towards the promised land). Without the Passover there is no historical beginning of the nation of Israel. (Without the new Passover there is no historical beginning for Christians)

After 70 A.D. (when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed) there was no more Passover feasts celebrated. A new feast was instituted called SADER - which is still celebrated by every Jewish family around the world today.

c) Theological Significance

This represents the intervention of God directly into the life of the people of Israel to give them "freedom from oppression". For the Christian this is also a time when we celebrate God's direct intervention for all peoples of all nations, by the offering up of His Son Jesus Christ on the Cross. We also remember His victory over death, to become the evidence of a new spiritual harvest, Himself becoming "first fruits of the resurrection".

2. PENTECOST

a) Agricultural significance

From the Greek word “Penta” which means 50. The Hebrew word is “Hamisheen” and is celebrated 50 days after Passover, the feast to celebrate the first fruits of the wheat harvest, the major food source for the nation of Israel.

b) Historical Significance

Called the “Festival of Weeks”, it is in fact Chapter 2 of Passover. 50 days after the first Passover in Egypt, Moses received the Law on Mt. Sinai (the first time). These tablets were destroyed because of the disobedience and the sins of the nation of Israel.

c) Theological Significance

3,000 people were destroyed at this time because of their rebellion against God. Jewish people stay up all night to read the Torah. In particular they read the Book of Ruth. This is an expression of dedication and attachment of Gentiles to the Torah. It gives Freedom ---- Law & order ----- Discipline and obedience.

For the Christian it is the time when we remember that God fulfilled His promise of Hosea 4:6 and the Words of Jesus Christ, just before his ASCENSION into Heaven, to wait for the Promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost -- who is the seal of our salvation until the judgement day - our day of salvation.

This is also the time when we remember the evidence of the main spiritual harvest beginning, with more than 3,000 Jews and Gentiles accepting Christ as their Saviour, and being sealed by the Holy Spirit, until the day of salvation. This is a promise which is given to “all those who are afar off” - in both time and distance.

Many churches today argue about the value of the Holy Spirit in the world today and whether the Gifts of the Spirit of 1. Corinthians 13 are evident in the world today. If the Holy Spirit is not in the world today we cannot become saved today, because Acts 2:38 says : **REPENT OF YOUR SINS, BE BAPTISED, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.** These three conditions for salvation are all indicated in the same verse of Scripture. You cannot have one without the other, otherwise we are saying that God’s word is not true.

In Ephesians 1:13-14 it says : ***In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory***”.

We are purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, we are His possession, and the proof of this is that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

If the Holy Spirit is not evident in the world today we all have a problem because the Scripture says that He (the Holy Spirit) we will be withdrawn only at the time of Judgement.

According to the Word of God, any church which claims that the Holy Spirit is not in evidence in the world today is at risk of the following :-

- a) Grieving the Holy Spirit - which is a direct commandment of a thing we must not do.
- b) Will be charged as being of the Church of Laodicea, as referred to in the Book of Revelations - a church that Jesus will spit out of His mouth.
- c)

3. TABERNACLES

Autumn, the feast to celebrate the in-gathering of the last of all the crops and animals before the winter.

Feast Name	Agricultural Significance	Historical Significance	Religious Significance
Passover	Spring Feast to celebrate the harvest of the First Fruits - the Barley harvest. Jesus is often referred to as the “First Fruits of the Resurrection”.	God’s direct intervention into the lives of the oppressed in Egypt, to prepare them to leave and become a nation. They were to prepare a meal of unleavened bread, wine and kill and eat a perfect lamb. The blood was placed on the doorposts and the Angel of death Passed Over this house and the first born of each family in the house was protected from death.	This represents the direct intervention of God into the life of the people of Israel to give them “freedom from oppression”. For the Christian this is also a time when we celebrate God’s direct intervention for all peoples of all nations, by the offering up of His Son Jesus Christ on the Cross. We also remember His victory over death, to become the evidence of a new spiritual harvest, Himself becoming “first fruits of the resurrection”.

THE PASSOVER FEAST

Before this feast can commence, the wife and the daughters must thoroughly clean out the house, completely, wash all the special feast vessels and remove all yeast and leaven from the house. For 7 days they must eat unleavened bread.

A sheep would then be selected with great care from among their flock and cared for as a pet for 4 days (given special attention) On the evening of the night of the Passover the lamb is killed, and roasted on the fire and prepared for eating - nothing must remain at the completion of the meal. The Passover table is laid out with the following ingredients on a beautiful tablecloth :-

- Unleavened Bread
- Bitter Herbs
- Roasted Lamb
- Wine

In the preparation of the Passover Feast the Head of the House will be asked by the youngest male member of the family why they are having this feast and why it is so important for them to celebrate it.

The Father (or Grandfather) will then recount the story about how God Almighty gave special instructions to Moses about this Feast and why it is so special. These readings are from the Scriptures in Exodus 12 :1-20. Then he will take up the unleavened bread and give thanks to the Lord in a prayer of thanksgiving.

Once he has finished the prayer he will **break the bread into three pieces and interchange the second and third pieces** before laying them back onto the table.

He will then take up the bowl with the bitter herbs and eat a small portion. This is followed by the bread and a portion of the lamb and finally a glass of non-alcoholic wine.

The spiritual significance of the breaking of the bread is not understood by many Jews, but it has special significance to Christians, because it is another confirmation of the Promises from God. The whole piece of the bread represents the Godhead. The first piece represents God the Father. The second piece of bread represents Jesus Christ. The third piece of bread represents the Holy Spirit.

When they take the second and third pieces and interchange them, it signifies the promise that Jesus would not leave us nor forsake us, but would provide to us “The Comforter” the Holy Spirit to be with us and to guide us.

The Scriptures record all the special things that Jesus did during His ministry here on earth. We know that the Ministry of Jesus was about three years. Yet we only have Him recorded as attending one Passover meal with His disciples. This is because He attended the first two Passover meals with His “earthly family”.

You will recall that Jesus make mention that the Passover feast before His Crucifixion is a special feast that He wants to share with His disciples - not His family.

Jesus was instigating a new concept into the Passover. The family which participates in this feast is a family which is selected by Jesus Christ and belongs to Him.

The elements used by Jesus were the same as in the original Passover feast - but the lamb was different. The Bread was taken by Jesus, He gave thanks to His Father in Heaven, just like it had been done at each and every Passover Feast from the time of Moses. He then broke it symbolically into three pieces, interchanged the second and third pieces, and put them back onto the table. Up until this point there is no difference in the Jewish celebration.

Then Jesus tells His disciples that the bread represents His Body which will be broken for the remission of sins of all nations. The Scriptures do not record that He ate the bitter herbs (although He was forced to drink bitter liquid on the cross). It then states that Jesus took the wine at the end of the meal - indicating that the Sheep which was brought to the feast was eaten.

Jesus then took the wine and told the Disciples that it represented the Blood of the New Covenant - his blood which would be shed for many. (This New Covenant was nothing new to the Jews as it is recorded in Jeremiah 31:31)

Jesus told His disciples that they were to partake in this feast regularly, to remember Him, until He returns. So today, when we take part in the Holy Communion (the New Passover Feast) we must recognise that we are proclaiming that we belong to Jesus Christ.

It is therefore important that before we partake of this feast that we ensure that our “Spiritual Houses” are washed perfectly clean and that there is no “leaven” (sin) remaining in our “Spiritual houses” - which is ourselves. Because God makes it very clear that people who partake of the Communion in an incorrect spiritual attitude will be judged for it - in just the same way as the Jews would be judged if they partake of leavened bread during the Passover Feast period.

6/02/97

The Epistle Of James

(A Study)

1. AUTHORSHIP

There are three prominent persons with the name of James referred to in the New Testament. Biblical Scholars generally agree, that the James referred to by Apostle Paul in Galatians 1:19, (the Lord’s brother) was the most probable writer of this Epistle, at approximately 47 A.D. - some 20 years after the ascension of Jesus Christ.

1.1 Background of James

James (the Lord’s brother) was a man who had heard all the stories about visits by angels to his Aunt Elizabeth and Mary (his mother)- about Zechariah being unable to speak until the birth of John the Baptist, the special events surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, he knew of the escape into Egypt of Joseph, Mary and Jesus and the instructions for their subsequent return to Israel.

James was a person who had lived daily with Jesus for more than 20 years, who had remembered when Jesus got lost and that his father and mother went back into Jerusalem searching for Him - finding Him expounding the Torah to amazed Rabbis in the Temple.

Here was a man who was an eyewitness to the miracles performed by Jesus, (John 7:3) who was present at his trial, crucifixion and subsequent burial - but was a man who was not a “believer”.

He was a man who still did not believe that Jesus Christ - his own step-brother, was the Messiah, promised for generations in the Old Testament Scriptures.

But when Jesus Christ arose from the dead, distinct positive proof of the promises of the Old Testament, (and confirmation of the words of Jesus Christ Himself - that the only sign which He would give to this generation would be the sign of Jonah) the eyes of James were suddenly opened and the revelation light shone in. (1 Cor. 15:7)

It is quite possible that James was present when Jesus ascended into Heaven, as he is recorded as being part of the group of 120 who remained in Jerusalem and prayed continually until they received the promise from above - the Holy Spirit. James became a firm believer of Jesus Christ and a staunch member of the newly formed church in Jerusalem.

It is clearly recorded in Acts 15:13-34 how James was an active member in the Council in Jerusalem at that time and that he was widely respected for his views and leadership.

It is also recorded in Acts 21:18 that Apostle Paul reported about his first missionary journey to James and the other elders of the church in Jerusalem.

So in conclusion, this is an Epistle written, not by a prophet, not by one of the “Chosen Apostles”, not by an Elder, but by an “ordinary believer” - hence the reason that there was so much arguments about whether it should be included into the Bible at all.

2. TO WHOM IS THIS EPISTLE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED

James 1:1 ***“James, a (Bond)servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes scattered abroad [among the dispersion] (the dispersed ones) : Greetings - rejoice !”***

James starts out in verse 1 to indicate who he is, and to whom this Epistle is intended. He does not identify himself as the brother of Jesus Christ an identification which would place him high above other believers - but he identifies himself as a “Bond” servant - a person who has consciously decided to become a full-time servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He identifies himself from a position of complete humbleness.

He is writing this Epistle to a church which has seen marvellous times and now difficult times, for example :-

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;
- His appearance to many believers during the next 40 days;
- His ascension into heaven and the message from the angels;
- The receiving of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room;
- The sermon by Peter after this event, when 3,000 persons accepted Jesus Christ as their personal saviour;
- The growth of the early church;
- The trip by Philip to preach;
- The stoning of Steven;
- The subsequent persecution of many Christians, and
- The final dispersion away from Jerusalem for their own safety.

This was a church facing religious culture shock. Many people were parts of families which had been beaten, family members put into gaol and in some cases, put to death. In this situation it is quite probable that some people were questioning the wisdom of this struggle and whether they should continue to follow Jesus - or return to their old ways and worship in the Temple again. James stops them short with his strong words in verse 2. ***“Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, (brothers and sisters) whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort, or fall into various temptations”.***

James points out that life is a matter of many choices. They can be happy or sad, trusting or doubtful. They can build on the promises of the Old Testament and the signs and wonders of Jesus and His disciples, or they can turn away - the choice is up to them. James cannot make this choice for them - they must do it on their own and once this choice is made they have to put it into practise. James was making a clear distinction between 2 types of religion, namely :-

- The marks or clear identification of True Religion;
- The marks of people in false religious procedures.

James makes it quite plain in the next section of Scripture that trials and temptations are specifically allowed to occur in the life of a Christian, to strengthen your faith and to test your foundations, your endurance and your patience.

Paul makes it very clear in 1 Cor. 10:13 that God will not allow us to be tested beyond our level of faith, so we must recognise this important fact. James was making this point to the early Christian Church, well before Paul even commenced to write the Corinthian Epistle.

8/4/97

Australia

Word from the Lord

8/4/97 @ 5.30 am

“Get away from this nation!! says the Lord - get away !! I have given My Son’s life for this nation and I have commanded them to live in unity and harmony with each other, as brothers and sisters in one body, to be an example to all nations of the region. But they have refused to listen to My Words, they have refused to live as brothers and sisters, even within their own church groups. They fight with each other, they make My Words about love, grace and harmony a laughing stock among the heavens. I have sent My Words down to them on many occasions, by the mouths of the Prophets and through the anointing of My Holy Spirit, through mighty miracles, signs and wonders - but they did not see - they did not listen - for they have become a stubborn generation.

Therefore I will withdraw My presence from them. When they cry out for help, I will not hear them. When they cry out in prayer, I will not answer. I will allow them to follow the ways and the desires of their hearts and let them go the ways they have chosen, for they have become a rebellious people, a people without a soul, a people without

dignity or honour, a people who do not consider Me to be their God. Get away from this nation - get away, otherwise you will be destroyed along with them."

When I got up out of bed to write down these words, I cried out to the Lord in prayer, for this nation and for its people. "Lord, it is true that you have sent Your Son to die on the cross for the people of this nation. It is true that You alone are the true God Almighty and that You govern and control the earth. It is true that the people who live in this nation do not worship You in Spirit and in Truth, and for that reason You have the right to punish us and to take Your Holy Spirit from us.

But Lord, You also know in Your heart that there are people here, many individuals, who recognise you as their personal Lord and Saviour - who try to listen to, and follow Your Words - who try to be an example to those around them, in this terrible place.

- Is it right and just that You take Your Salvation from them ?
- Is it right and just that you refuse to listen to their prayers ?
- Is it right and just that you judge the righteous alongwith the ungodly ?

I remind You Lord of the Words in Your Scriptures, when You came down to Abraham and told him about Sodom and Gomorrah. He pleaded for that city, and You agreed that You would not destroy it, if there was five righteous people within its walls. Lord, is there not five righteous people among us in this nation ?

Lord, I ask that You give us this message as a warning, to allow the righteous to continue to be a witness to this generation - to try to make them see Your love and Your compassion for them - even when they do not respond to it - even when they don't deserve it.

Lord, we, as a nation are like the prodigal son - we have taken our inheritance and we have squandered it on good living. We have no right to be in Your presence, by our works or our deeds. But Lord, Your Word shows us that even when the prodigal son was out of sight - You continued to look and search for him - hoping to see him returning to You - coming back to You along the road. You did not forsake him - even though he appeared to have forsaken You. When he was still afar off down the road, You recognised him - You ran to meet him - You extended Your heart and Your love to Him - You opened Your arms to welcome him home again. Lord, because Your Word shows us that You did this for the prodigal son, are You going to turn Your back on this nation ?

Lord, are you going to turn your back on the righteous ones who have confessed their love and devotion to You and who try to walk Your paths, every day on their lives ? Are You going to take their salvation from them ?

Lord, I cry out to You - turn Your face away from this destruction. As You did in Ninevah, let us be given one last warning. Let us be given another chance to turn from our wicked ways and to repent of our wickedness, to ask for forgiveness and to turn back to You again - to once again be considered part of Your blessed family - to once again be able to come into Your presence and to sing praises unto Your glorious name.

Lord, depart not from Your Holy Words because of our sins; do not put Your anger on us at this time. Instead Lord, put Your Holy Spirit amongst us, as it has never been seen before. Pour out Your anointing upon each and every person who proclaims Your Holy name. Let them know that You love them and You care for them - that You will care for them as a mother hen does for its little chickens. Let this be the beginning of the revival for this nation.

Let us have the opportunity to see Your glory in this place and to feel Your mighty presence here - just like it is in Thailand and in Singapore - where thousands came to make decisions for You and to turn away from other gods. Let this be the glorious beginning of Your kingdom here in this place. Let Your light continue to shine among the nations and let Australia be one of those lights".

25/4/97

Passing The Tests In The Christian Walk

When we go to school we are taught the basics of reading, writing & arithmetic at an early age, as a grounding and preparation for the higher levels of educational learning. At the end of each year, we are subjected to a test or examination, to see if we have learned these subjects correctly. If we pass the tests we are allowed to progress to the next harder level of teaching. If we don't, then we are advised to repeat that class level and learn the subjects better, so that when the next examination occurs, we will pass with flying colours, thus enabling us to proceed with the rest of our education, on the correct educational foundations.

Our walk with Jesus Christ is the same as the education learning process I have outlined above. We are first taught elementary stories when we go to Sunday School and then more advanced stories and lessons in the Church and Bible study groups during our later years of Christian lives. Unfortunately not all churches follow this path and do not progress past the elementary levels of Christian teachings.

This was the problem that Apostle Paul found when he wrote the letter to the Hebrews. Some of the early churches were getting people to convert to Christianity, getting them baptised by immersion in water, teaching them the elementary lessons about forgiveness of sins, etc., but were not progressing from there.

This meant that when a Christian was faced with a time of testing, he did not have a strong Spiritual base upon which to rely and as a result many were falling by the wayside.

In Hebrews Chapter 5, Paul indicates that this manner of teaching is not good enough and encourages the churches to stop repeating the elementary teaching, and move onto something more beneficial to the believers.

Paul was trying to encourage the Churches to change over from **MILK SCRIPTURES**, to **MEAT SCRIPTURES**, something with good sustainable Spiritual foundations.

Hebrews 5:11-14 says :

"Concerning this we have much to say which is hard to explain, since you have become dull in your [spiritual hearing & sluggish, even slothful in achieving spiritual insight] for even though by this time you ought to be teaching others, you actually need some-one to teach you over again, the very first principles of god's word. you have come to need milk, not solid food. or every-one who continues to feed on milk is obviously inexperienced and unskilled in the doctrine of righteousness [that is, of conformity to the divine will in purpose, thought and action,] for he is a mere (spiritual) infant - not able to talk yet (of spiritual matters). but solid food is for full-grown men, for those whose senses and mental faculties are trained by practise (not just by hearing) to discriminate and distinguish between what is morally good and noble and what is evil and contrary, either to divine, or human law."

Paul was telling these people (many who had been trained in the Jewish law from birth), that they had become spiritually lazy and needed to go for a refresher course in the important things of the Christian life.

They had become so 'blaze' about the way they went about their lives, that they were now unable to distinguish between shades of evil in the community they lived in, because they lacked the spiritual experience, sharpened by continual practice of spiritual battles with the forces of evil. Paul told them to go back to Christian Kindergarten and learn these basic teachings again. But once you had re-learned them, don't stop there - go on to spiritual perfection.

In Hebrews Chapter 6, Paul defines Spiritual Kindergarten. All the brothers here tonight should be able to freely converse on all these topics and in fact, as the elders in the church, teach on any and all of the subjects, not just from theory, but from practical experience in our individual lives. So let us look quickly at the Kindergarten subjects of the Christian life. HEBREWS 6:1-2

"Therefore let us go on and get past the elementary (kindergarten) stage in the teachings and doctrines of Christ, the messiah, advancing steadily towards the completeness and perfection that belongs to spiritual maturity. let us not again be laying the :

- ***foundation of repentance***
- ***abandonment of dead works***
- ***faith by which you turned to god***
- ***teachings about purification***
- ***the laying on of hands***
- ***the resurrection from the dead***
- ***the eternal judgement & punishment***

these are all matters of which you should be fully aware about long, long ago".

We have heard that people are starting to question if Jesus was really the Messiah. I saw a book published here in Coffs Harbour, called "Jesus, the Man". If we are Spiritually alive and aware of the things which are against the Divine Law, then every Christian in any country should be up in arms about allowing things like this to be published, because it is against God's Divine law.

In Hebrews :1-2, Paul outlines 7 basic teachings which he considers to be the Milk scriptures, the Kindergarten Scriptures, for every Christian, which must be taught in all churches. Unfortunately not all churches teach these 7 basic lessons today, as they claim they don't believe in them.

This means that the people who go to these types of churches don't even get the basics taught properly, let alone the mature teachings. This is why Paul makes a startling statement in Hebrews 6:3. ***"If indeed god permits, we will now proceed to advanced teaching."***

Many Christians today are falling by the wayside, because the church does not teach the 7 basic foundations correctly, or fails to proceed to other more mature teachings, so that the congregation can grow in spiritual strength.

Paul charged the spiritual leaders of the early church with the responsibility of checking their spiritual progress, against the yardstick of meeting spiritual tests, and progressing to the next level.

He also pointed out to the believers that God would not allow us as a church, or as individual believers, to move up to the next level of spiritual maturity, until God Himself was satisfied with our performance.

As the brotherhood of the church, we have the responsibility to conduct a spiritual audit of the church and to ensure that the church is continually progressing up the steps of spiritual maturity.

If this is not the case, then the elders in the brotherhood have the responsibility to make sure that the necessary changes take place, to ensure that in the immediate future this will happen.

By following the guidelines set out in the Scriptures, is the only way the church can grow, the way the Lord wants it to grow, bringing glory and honour to him.

Author's Note : If you have a problem with what you have just read, don't argue with me about it. All I am doing is bringing God's Word to your attention – your argument is with Him ! and he has not lost an argument yet – so I would suggest that you pray about it for wisdom and guidance.

25/04/97

Is The Bible The Word Of God?

This morning I want to challenge you and ask you a simple question :- **DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD ???** I am sure that many of you will answer in your heads "Of course we do - what a stupid question to ask us Christians".

Well the truth of the matter is, that if you believe, that the Bible is truly the Word of God, then you and I have no alternative, but to take up its contents and act upon them in your lives. James 1:22-27 says :

- 22 *Obey the message; be doers of the Word, and not merely listeners to it, betraying yourselves into deception, by reasoning's which are contrary to the Truth.*
- 23 *For if anyone only listens to the Word without obeying it and being a doer of it, he is like a man who looks carefully at his own natural face in a mirror. -(He only sees a false image - not the real thing).*
- 25 *But if a man follows after the faultless law of freedom (which is in Christ Jesus); being not a heedless listener who forgets; but an active doer [who obeys the Word and the prompting of the Holy Spirit], he shall be blessed in his doing -in his life of obedience.*
27. *External religious worship (as is expressed in outward physical acts) that is pure and unblemished in the sight of God the Father is this:- to visit and help and care for the orphans and widows in their affliction and need, and to keep oneself unspotted and uncontaminated from the effects of the world.*

Today, in our society, we say let the Government look after them - its not our problem. However, God says it is. This is why the early church had a widows fund - to provide for the widows, the orphans and the needy in their community. God the Father considers these actions to be pure and perfect and unblemished in His sight. Don't you want God Almighty to look upon your actions in this way ??

Romans 8:8 says in part that people who are living their lives in the flesh - catering to the desires and impulses of the flesh cannot please God, cannot satisfy God, or be pleasing to Him. In God's eyes their lives are wasted.

Romans 8:29 says that God chose us to be moulded into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. God Almighty wants believers to become firstly disciples, then to become imitators of Christ in all things.

Why is this so ? Because if we believe that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, then we are empowered to do the same things that Jesus did when He walked upon the earth - in fact even greater things than this.

Jesus commenced His ministry on earth by quoting a Scripture from the book of **Isaiah 61:1-2**

1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has appointed and qualified Me to preach the Gospel of good tidings to the meek, the poor and the afflicted: He has sent me to bind up and heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom to the physical and spiritual captives, and the opening of the prison and the eyes to those who are bound in satanic wrapping.*
2. *To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord - the year of His favour.*

The amplified bible has the following note on this Scripture : Once when Jesus visited a synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16:21) He was handed the scroll of the Book of Isaiah for Him to read aloud. He deliberately turned to Isaiah 61, which tells what His coming to the world would mean - all eleven verses of it. But He read only a few lines of the chapter - stopping in the middle of verse 2 and then saying to the assembled congregation : ***"Today has this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears"***.

Jesus has just read of His coming to preach the Gospel, to proclaim release to the captives (of Satan), to give sight to the physically and spiritually blind, to set at liberty the bruised, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Overseas we sing a chorus which goes like this :

Holy spirit come, make my eyes to see, make my ears to hear and my mouth to speak, make my heart to seek and my hands to reach out and touch the world with your love.

But unfortunately we cannot do this, unless we have “the love of God” in our hearts. To do the things which are considered pure in the sight of God Almighty, we must be able to extend God’s love to the community at large.

We can only do this, if we are prepared, if we will allow, the Holy Spirit to come into our lives and to start to prompt us to do the will of God in our lives.

The Scripture clearly shows how the Holy Spirit prompted Philip in Acts 8:5-8 (an ordinary person - a person who may not have seen Jesus in person) to go down to Samaria and to proclaim Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to the people.

It goes on to say that great crowds of people listened to and heeded what Philip had to say and watched as miracles and wonders were performed by him under the power and prompting of the Holy Spirit.

People were healed who were oppressed by evil spirits and suffering from many different types of paralysis and illnesses and there was great rejoicing in the city.

This could not have happened unless Philip was prepared to say “Yes” to the Prompting of the Holy Spirit. Pastor Mike Field has been challenging you, to become more sensitive to the Gifts and leadings of the Holy Spirit, in your individual lives - to ask for, and be prepared to receive, the indwelling empowerment, of the Holy Spirit - which will equip all believers, who are willing to make their lives a vessel for His service.

God says we are to love our brothers and sisters - irrespective of their race, political persuasion, their station in life, or their present spiritual relationship with our Lord. If we don’t let the Holy Spirit come to dwell in our hearts then we cannot possess His love in our hearts.

Romans 12: 2 commands us to change our lives. *“Do not be conformed to this world, to this day and age - do not be fashioned after, or adapted to, its external, superficial customs - BUT - be transformed (changed) by the entire renewal of your mind - by its new ideals and its new attitudes - so that you may prove for yourselves, what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God - even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect in God’s sight for you”.*

Paul goes on to challenge each one of us to do our part, so that God’s perfect plan for the salvation of all nations shall be accomplished. But we must remember that salvation is not the end of the story - it is only the beginning.

When we accept Christ as our Saviour all our past sins and failures are put into God’s wastepaper basket - never to be brought out again- but in God’s eyes that is not enough. This is shown to us in Jeremiah Chapter 18.

When the potter takes hold of the clay - it becomes a chosen piece of raw material for the potter to shape and mould into something beautiful, as he desires - using his strength, his skills and his wisdom.

When we accept Christ as our Saviour we become a piece of clay ready to be placed upon the Master Potter’s Wheel. But Jesus Christ does not change us by force - He changes us by love.

Unless we are prepared to let Him come into our lives - take control and direct us - to allow ourselves to be placed onto the potter’s wheel, then no changes will take place.

Unless we are prepared to go out into the highways and byways - at the express prompting of the Holy Spirit, then the unbelievers in the world around us, will not be loved, nor brought into contact with the truth in God’s Word.

Unless we are prepared to become Holy Spirit conquered earthen vessels, there will be no growth in our individual lives, nor in the lives of the people around us. Do you believe that the Bible is the True Word of God ? If so, where are you today, in your journey with the Lord? Are you on the Potter’s wheel ?

- continually allowing Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to smooth away the rough edges,
- allowing yourself to be used by the Lord to bring others into His Kingdom,
- through the words spoken from your mouth,
- or the love given from your heart,
- or the money given happily to a person in need,
- or the many other ways God calls His people to serve Him. ?
- Or are you still waiting to start the changes ?

If you think that God is not using you in His service at the moment, or that you want to be used more by the Lord - then its time to tell Him, you are ready and willing and waiting to start.

The Nicodemus Experience

In the Bible in John 3:3, Jesus makes it very plain and clear to Nicodemus that he must be born again, or he will never see, or become acquainted with God, and most certainly never ever enter into Heaven.

This must have been a very startling statement for Nicodemus to hear. Nicodemus would have assumed, (like all other Jews of his time), who followed the Old Testament Law, who had been circumcised 8 days after their birth, that they were guaranteed entry into Heaven - because they belonged to the Nation of Israel, and were the sons and daughters of Abraham, the promised ones who were chosen by God Almighty Himself.

Let us examine carefully who Nicodemus was, and let us learn from what Jesus told him, so that we may also be able to have the same promises and benefits that the Lord told Nicodemus he could receive - if he was obedient to the Word of the Lord.

John 3:1-2 says (Amplified Bible) ***“Now there was a certain man among the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler - a leader, an authority - among the Jews; who came to Jesus at night and said to Him. Rabbi, we know and are certain that you are come from God as a Teacher; for no-one can do these signs - these wonder works, these miracles, and produce the proofs that You do, unless God is with him”.***

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of the Jewish Leaders of the day, a person who was an authority on their faith, on their laws and how God wanted and expected them to live their daily lives, as the chosen nation of the Lord God Almighty.

Nicodemus would have been proudly able to trace his lineage all the way back to Aaron, the first High Priest. From his early childhood he would have been schooled and grounded in the Torah (the first 5 Books of the Old Testament given by God to Moses - the books of the Prophets and the Books of Proverbs and the Psalms - in fact the whole of the Old Testament we have today.)

In addition he would also have studied the Talmud - (the Oral Law - which tells the Jews **“HOW TO IMPLEMENT”** God’s Word into their daily lives). When he becomes 30 years of age, in accordance with the Scriptures, he would have commenced to teach younger members of the nation in the Temple.

Here was a man who would be beyond any doubt that he was of the chosen one, a person certain to be with the Lord in eternity, a person waiting anxiously for the Messiah to come, as proclaimed by the prophets.

He was obviously aware that Jesus was indeed a special person who had God’s anointing upon His shoulders, and he mentions this in his opening address to Jesus.

Nicodemus recognised that **NO ORDINARY MAN** could explain the Law of Moses with such deep spiritual understanding and bring such new revelations on its words, unless the hand of God Almighty was upon Him.

Nicodemus also recognised that **NO ORDINARY MAN** could perform the miracles that Jesus performed, unless God was with him.

Jesus, (through the Spirit of Revelation Knowledge) knew that there was a spiritual emptiness in Nicodemus, and Jesus gets straight down to the real nitty gritty contents of the problem, and proclaims this amazing revelation in John 3:3. ***“And Jesus answered him, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that unless a person is born again (anew from above) he cannot ever see - know, be acquainted with - or experience - the Kingdom of God”.***

Here was a man, who was well schooled in the Law, being told that he had to have a special **BORN AGAIN EXPERIENCE** if he wanted to experience or be acquainted with God.

What Jesus was telling Nicodemus was something completely new - something that required further clarification, so that there would be no doubt in his mind that he would be able to do exactly what Jesus was now telling him. Nicodemus was a man looking at the words of Jesus in a literal - physical sense, not understanding at all that Jesus was talking about higher spiritual things.

In the following verses in John chapter 3, Nicodemus asks these questions and each of them is clarified by the Lord. If Nicodemus wanted a closer, living relationship with God Almighty, then he must recognise that God is a spirit and he must be prepared to be born again of the spirit to meet God in the spiritual realm.

Jesus was telling Nicodemus very bluntly that if he was not prepared to be born again of the spirit, then there was no chance of him ever reaching Heaven, or being able to know or be acquainted with God Almighty here on earth.

MANY PEOPLE TODAY ARE JUST LIKE NICODEMUS: They have been “born into Christian Families”, they can trace their “Christian lineage” back for many generations, and therefore they proudly believe and claim that they are the chosen ones who will be with the Lord in Heaven. **BUT ALAS - THAT IS NOT SO !!!**

⇒ If this was the case, there would have been no need for Jesus to come to earth in the first place.



There would be no need for a new covenant to be given on the earth - the old one would have been good enough.

But we know that there is sin on the earth and that the Law made us aware of that sin, but could not relieve us of the stigma, or the consequences of sin at judgement time.

Romans 6:23 says : "***The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ***". This is why the Prophets of old told us that Jesus was coming, and that He would be the "once and for all sacrifice" for our sins. He was raised up on the cross at Calvary, and by conquering death He proved that He was the "***first fruits of the resurrection***" - to live, and be acquainted with God the Father, for evermore.

We know that God's Word is true - it is unchanging and the power of His Words will never end. This fact is confirmed for us in several Scriptures.

John 1:1 "***In the beginning (before all time began) was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God and the Word was God Himself***".

John 1:14 "***And the Word [Christ] became flesh (human flesh incarnate) and tabernacled - fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile, - among us; and we actually saw His glory - His honour, His majesty; such glory as an only begotten Son receives from His Father, full of grace (favour, loving kindness) and truth.***"

Hebrews 13:8 "***Jesus Christ, the Messiah, [The Word] is always the same, yesterday, today, [YES] and forever***".

Now we have some real souls searching to do. If Jesus Christ is not changing, and the Word of God is not changing, then it means that what Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus also applies to us today, right here and now, wherever we are, right here this moment.

We cannot experience, be acquainted with, or know God in our lives, unless we are prepared to be born anew of the spirit. WE - HERE TODAY, MUST BE ABLE TO SAY THAT WE ARE BORN AGAIN - OTHERWISE WE WILL NOT MEET JESUS OR ENTER INTO HEAVEN.

But many people say - Oh, that does not mean me. My mother and my father are Christians. I was sprinkled with water when I was a baby and my mother and my father promised to teach me about God and to bring me up in the knowledge and ways of the Lord. This can't possibly mean me. ! I'm sure that I'm going to Heaven. Well, I've got some good news and some bad news for you !!!

If Jesus Christ was telling Nicodemus, who could trace his descendants right back to Aaron, the high priest, the brother of Moses, if Jesus was telling Nicodemus that he needed to be born again, then it most certainly means that you and I must be able to say that we are born again - or we better be born again today.

It may be true that your parents had you sprinkled with water when you were a little baby, as a sign to God and to the congregation that they were going to bring you up with a knowledge of God and His ways, BUT THAT IS NOT ENOUGH TO GUARANTEE YOU WILL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Jesus told His disciples that John the Baptist was the greatest of all the Prophets. John the Baptist preached that sin was an individual thing, not a collective thing for a nation. John the Baptist made it clear to all that heard him, that each person was accountable before God for their individual sins.

John the Baptist encouraged each person to be baptised in water, as a public sign of their repentance towards God and that they would change their ways and try not to sin anymore. Let us look at God's creation around us and see the spiritual revelations that God Almighty has there for us.

An eagle will care for its young and even be prepared to die so that its young may be protected from predators. When the young bird gets old enough, the parent birds will start flapping their wings to teach the younger ones how to prepare for flight. If the birds are bright and intelligent they soon learn and are soon soaring on the winds and rising up high into the heavens.

But if a young bird is slow in learning how to fly, the parent eagle will pick up the young bird in its beak and take it up high in the sky and let it go. Down it comes, plummeting towards certain death if it does not start to flap its wings and learn how to fly all by itself.

If the young bird does not learn the first time, the parent eagle catches it in its beak and takes it up even higher in the sky and drops it again.

But if after several attempts, the young bird does not flap its wings and learn to fly, the parents let it crash to its death on the rocks below. Your parents are just like the eagle.

They have taken you to church, they have had you sprinkled with water, as is the custom or tradition in most churches, (just like the ritual circumcision undertaken in the Jewish faith on the eighth day) they have enrolled you and brought you to Sunday School, they have taught you how to live a good Christian life, with Christian values and have reared you up until you are now ready to make decisions and leave home.

Like the young eagles you are now ready to leave the nest. From now on, you must be accountable to God Almighty for your own salvation. - you are not your parent's responsibility to God anymore. You must look very

carefully at the things that your parents have taught you and decide for yourself, as an adult, whether you are going to follow these values or not.

Like the Jews who came to John the Baptist, you must be prepared to state publicly that you have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and that you want to be washed clean of sin in your life.

Jesus Christ, who was born of the Spirit, who had no sin in His life, was baptised in the river Jordan, as a sign that what John the Baptist was teaching, was spiritually correct, and that all persons who wanted to know God and be with Him, must follow and be imitators of Jesus Christ and His teachings.

Like the people who came to Peter in Acts chapter 2, you must be prepared to follow the words spoken by Apostle Peter, under the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit and recorded in Acts 2:38.

- Step 1** **REPENT OF YOUR SINS BEFORE GOD ALMIGHTY**
Pray the sinners prayer
- Step 2** **BE BAPTISED IN WATER** [as an adult] - as a public witness that you are going to change your ways, acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of your life.
- Step 3** **RECEIVE GOD'S PROMISED GIFT - THE HOLY SPIRIT** to be your spiritual guide and helper throughout the rest of your new life - in Christ.
- Step 4** **PRAY FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE** - so that others may know that you now belong to Jesus and that you are obedient to His Words and instructions in the Scriptures.

Many people today think that these things are wrong and that they only apply to the first century church - but this is not so, for salvation is through no-one else except Jesus Christ in any day or age.

Jesus said so in His own words in John 14:6:- “ *Jesus said to him, I am the way [I am] the truth, [I am] the life; no-one comes to the Father except by (through) Me*”.

I will now pose three spiritual testing questions for each of you here today.

- Question 1.** Do you believe that the Word as written in John 14:6 is true ? That no man or woman can come to the Father except through Jesus Christ ? Do you believe that there is salvation in no-one else ?
- Question 2.** Do you believe that Jesus Christ was baptised in the River Jordan as recorded in Matthew 3:13-16 ? Do you believe that as an adult He went through the waters of baptism, in addition to already having been circumcised on the eighth day after His birth, as was the custom of the Jews ?
- Question 3.** Do you believe that Jesus received the Holy Spirit from God the Father after He performed the spiritual re-birth which is symbolic in the water baptism, as recorded in Matt. 3:16 ?

If you answered YES to each of these questions, then you must now decide whether you are going to be obedient to the words of Jesus and enter into a new relationship with Him and accept Christ as your personal Saviour and your personal Lord.

Without these things you cannot be born again and you cannot enter into a real day to day walk and relationship with Christ.

As we come together each Sunday, we remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world, for all who will be obedient to His teachings.

Let us join in these celebrations today, with new hope and purpose as we unite with Christ, becoming spiritually reborn through Him. Let us learn to experience the joy of Jesus Christ in our lives on a daily, minute by minute basis.

LET US PRAY.

Do Gods Work - Gods Way

A vision statement:

- **Two Sailing Boats**

One boat converted by man - using man's technology and power - when the power runs out the boat will be at the mercy of the tides. The currents, and the wind will indicate in which direction it will travel and when danger comes there will be no escape because there will be no power to allow the boat to sail away from the problem - this boat is eventually doomed to destruction and failure.

One boat using man's abilities, as a team effort, but trusting God to provide the power. This boat has a captain, a navigator, a helmsman, and a crew to man the sails and pull the ropes. When the storms come there is power from the sails to allow the boat to travel and to bypass any problems identified by the navigator. The same word picture can be used to identify 2 church types.

1. **the first church is God made - but modified by man** - made into man's image - not God's image- therefore it will not have God's blessing, because now it does not bring glory to Him. It will eventually wither up and disappear in some way or other, whichever way God decides to do it.
2. **God's church - doing things God's way.** This church recognises that Jesus Christ is the owner of the church and that we are in the church by invitation - we are His guests through the acceptance of His blood on the cross at Calvary. As guests we have responsibilities to proclaim His word and to do His will. If we do this God has promised to bless us. If we don't, God has clearly indicated that He will withhold His blessings from us.

Several weeks ago Pastor Mike shared what was on his heart about evangelism and what he said clearly indicated to me that God was stirring up Mike's heart in this area of ministry.

As a church, we have to be sensitive to these things. If God stirs up the pastor's heart in an area of ministry, which is very clearly part of God's plan for his church, it is time for us to examine where we all are as individuals, in relation to that ministry.

Mike said that there was only 1 person he identified in the church who was **"doing the work of an evangelist"**. Mike did not say that there was only 1 evangelist in the church. No ! he said that there was only 1 person who was **"doing the work of an evangelist"**.

The scriptures tell us that we must be not only hearers of the word - but doers also. I was forced to examine my own life and my own position before the Lord and what I found was not an exciting picture. What Mike said was in fact true.

For more that 20 years I have been "doing the work of an evangelist", travelling to more than 40 countries to preach and teach God's word - but I was not **"doing the work of an evangelist"** in this church, or in this country.

My mind was concentrated on more trivial things. my health, my well being, my financial position, my position in this society. the safety of Rani's family in Pakistan, etc.

What I had forgotten was that God Almighty promised to take care of all these things - if I just concentrated on doing one thing for Him.

What thing is that ?? To fulfil God's calling on my life. Do the things He has placed in my heart to do for Him. Become a doer of the word - not just a hearer only.

Because of this, Rani and I have been involved with migrant peoples here in Coffs Harbour, who find Australia a nice safe place to live, but sometimes confusing and lonely because we, as Australians are not always prepared to accept them into our society, because they look different, have different lifestyles, religions and social habits.

Last week Mike touched on this subject and told us quite clearly that our church should be a multicultural entity, because that's what God's Word says - whether we like it or not !!! He said that we must have the desire to become a "missionary minded church" - to send people out into other countries - or just down into High Street.

As referred to in Acts, 1-8, High Street is "Jerusalem" to us. We are responsible for starting our missionary work right here in our own backyards. Today I want to talk to you about five points of evangelism.

Isaiah 43:19 says: **"behold I will do something new among you; now it shall spring forth; will you not be aware of it: I will even make a roadway in the wilderness; rivers in the desert; I will do something new."**

The Lord wants to do something new and very exciting right here in the heart of you, today. Yes, you !! Right here in the seat where you are right now, as you continued to hear this message.

As the Holy Spirit works in the heart of a reborn Christian, pumping new power and enthusiasm through them, so the Lord wants to do the same for you today, to pump new life into the heart of your soul, so that your whole being can be reclaimed for Christ, out of the clutches of the evil one.

2 Chronicles 7:14 says: ***"If my people; which are called by my name; shall humble themselves; and pray; and seek my face; and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven: and will forgive their sins: and will heal their land"***.

We are God's people, we are called "Christian" - which means that "we belong to Christ". This scripture from the Old Testament is just as important to us today as it was to the nation of Israel.

The five points of evangelism are listed below. Without these things being set in motion, God cannot, and will not move amongst his people, because God Almighty cannot and will not contradict His own Word.

1. Be humble

We are called to humble ourselves, to get down off our social and religious pedestals, and kneel before the Lord, to seek His face, to repent of our sins (both individually as Christians, and collectively as the whole body of Christ)

2. Repent of our sins

For too long, Christians have been trying to get into heaven through the back door, without fully opening their hearts to God, so that the blood of Jesus can cleanse them and make them whole. Jesus wants to change that today.

3. Be ye holy as I am holy

The Lord wants His church to be holy, so that the effect of the church is felt in the streets, in the workplaces and in the homes. God wants individual Christians to get satan upset by being holy, just like Jesus did when He walked the earth.

When this happens, satan and his territorial spirits are put on notice that this is the dwelling place of God's people and that satan and his demons have to leave.

4. Renewal in the church

Before God can move in the streets, we have to let God move in all of the churches – starting with yours (unless you believe your church is perfect !!!) 2. Chronicles 7:14 tells us : ***"to seek His face"***.

Ephesians chapter 6 tells us to ***"put on the full armour of God"***. Ephesians chapter 6, verse 18 tells us : ***"praying always with all types of prayers and supplications in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints"***.

- we have to first start with prayers for all the saints.
- we first have to get the church back to full power, as in the days immediately after Pentecost, so that God can move with signs and wonders following.

In the New Testament the Lord tells us to get into spiritual battle and pray, so that the saints are fully equipped for war against satan in the spiritual realm.

Before God can do anything mighty in the world, the church must get back into the right way of doing things, that is - according to His word.

Christians can only "pray in the spirit"; if they have the holy spirit manifested and operating in their individual lives. If you don't have it (the Holy Spirit) working in your life, then you need to ***"seek His face"***, and ask the Lord to give you what is rightfully yours. acts 2:38 says: -

- a) repent of your sins
- b) be baptized in water
- c) and you shall receive the holy spirit

These three things are all linked together in the same scripture. You cannot have salvation without receiving the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit of God is not manifested and working in your life, you are going around like a car with the handbrake permanently on - it restricts the power to the wheels and won't let you perform to your whole potential. You need to change that - starting right now - starting today!!!

5. Revival in the church

When the ambulance man comes and “revives someone” he makes them breath again. They were either unconscious – or dead. Church history clearly shows that church revival starts only when people, who desire to be closer to God and be used by Him, get down on their knees in prayer. They have to start to “breathe in the Holy Spirit again”.

Jesus Himself charged us, each and every Christian with the responsibility to go out into the streets, the villages, and the cities and teach the people to become disciples, showing them how to live a life, like Jesus lived, as He walked the earth.

Jesus also told us in Acts 1:8: that we would receive power; when the Holy Spirit comes upon us; to be His witnesses: If we are believers, then we shall be witnesses for Him.

1. We can be active witnesses, going out into the streets, handing out tracts and sharing God’s word in the streets.
2. We can be positive witnesses by providing help to those in need like setting up the opportunity shops, providing soup kitchens, etc.
3. We can be passive witnesses, by going about in our own little worlds, not being involved in the troubles and hurts of others - adopting the typical Australian approach – “she’ll be right Jack”.
4. Or we can be negative witnesses, by going about gossiping about our neighbours, causing divisions in the body of Christ and many other things I don’t want to dwell on here.

Whether we like it or not, we fall into one, or a combination of the witness categories above, because Jesus said we shall be witnesses. the scripture says that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost.

In Psalm 127:1, it says: ***except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it, except the Lord keep the city; the watchman waketh but in vain***”.

The “church” of the world cannot do anything positive unless it follows God's laws and rules. God wants to put revival back into each and every church, which follows His Word, right across the nations. The challenge goes out to you today. are you ready to accept that challenge ?

It has been reported in 1995 that over 65,000 people have responded to accept Jesus Christ in the UK, through the Christian publication called "From minus to plus". God wants to do more than this in Australia. Hallelulyah !!!

Get excited !!! Get ready !!! God wants to do it in each and every nation on earth - to use each and everyone of you to expand His kingdom !!! God is waiting to release the spirit of revival across each nation. But it cannot happen unless the church and the people in it, are holy and acceptable vessels that the Lord can use.

Please prayerfully consider what you have just heard today. The success of God's plan, for this generation in this and other nations of the world rests with you. **LET US PRAY !!!**

29/10/97

The Woman At The Well

[John 4 1:15]

There have been many teachings about this series of Scriptures, by many learned people over the last 1900 years. In each case, the pastor, or bible teacher, always seems to be able to reveal some previously hidden new truth to the congregation.

This is a good thing, because it proves that the bible is not a dead book, but it is alive, and that God Almighty, through the Holy Spirit, opens up different levels and depths of understanding of His Holy Word, depending upon the levels of their faith, especially to the people who trust in Him completely and follow His commandments.

For the people in Western society today, this story has been told with many different twists to it. Unfortunately, some of them I feel, are incorrect teachings, due to the lack of understanding of the eastern cultures of that time in history.

To really understand the significance of this story, we must also know the history, and culture of the area, just like the people of Israel did, at the time of Jesus Christ, otherwise some of the important points can easily be missed.

Hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans had been long and intense and it started back at the time just after the death of King Solomon - some 700 years before the time of Christ.

King Solomon turned from God's path, by marrying into many foreign tribes and cultures, and allowed his wives to build temples within Israel to worship their own God's.

He caused, (by his own example) the people of the nation of Israel, to be lead away from the rules of obedience from following God Almighty. Because of the action of the king, the Lord became angry with Israel and said he would destroy it.

But because of the promise He made to David, a small remnant was to be left. Thus the twelve tribes, which were cemented into a nation under the Kingship of David, split up. The majority favouring the free and idolatrous life, given by the example of King Solomon and a few, who were righteous in their hearts, who decided to follow after the ways of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that is, to follow after the path that the Lord had revealed to the nation through its prophets.

The ten northern tribes, seceded from the nation of Israel, and its capital city Jerusalem, and formed themselves around a new capital city, which they called Samaria.

In biblical writings, these ten tribes are usually referred to as ISRAEL whilst the two remaining southern tribes were referred to as JUDAH.

Thus Jesus Christ is known as "the Lion of Judah", because he came from the righteous line of the tribes of the nation of Israel.

In 722 B.C. the Assyrian army laid siege to Samaria and captured the city. The remainder of the ten tribes, still living in the city were captured, and deported en-masse away to another place into captivity.

They were replaced by near eastern captives, from previous battles of the Assyrians, mostly Gentiles and polytheists, (which were people who believed in more than one God). The planted captive peoples adopted the religion of the captive country.

By the time of the New Testament, some 700 years later, they believed in and worshipped Yahweh, and acknowledged Moses as the supreme apostle of God.

They accepted the Torah (which are the first 5 books of the Bible (Genesis - Deuteronomy) as canonical (sacred) Scripture.

They recognized Mt. Gerizim (not Mt. Zion) as the chosen place of God, as mentioned in the Scripture in Deut. 14:23. They believed in and expected the Messiah to come. They believed in and expected a final day of judgement. So when you compare them to their southern brothers, their beliefs were very close, just like Protestants, Pentecostals, Evangelicals and Catholics today.

And just like today, we seem to fight with our brothers over some small issues of doctrine, instead of combining our forces and fighting against the evil of our common enemy - satan.

To make matters even worse, by the time the Romans arrived on the scene in Israel, orthodox Jews occupied the areas, both to the north and to the south of Samaria.

The Samaritans were looked down upon by the orthodox Jews. Their feelings of hatred was so intense against the Samaritans, that they rather travelled twice the distance, by going around this area, than to take the short cut, which saved them 25-30 Kms, which was more than a days' journey in those days. On the other hand, the Samaritans were not a hospitable people either.

They treasured the famous well of Jacob, the direct descendant of Abraham, but left no container at the well, to allow travellers to have a drink, if they needed one. They believed that the water from this well was sacred and for their use only.

The orthodox Jews would not have used the container if it had been left there by the Samaritans anyway, because they believed that if they drank from a jar which had previously been used by one of the Samaritans, they would be defiled and would not be able to go to the synagogue, without first following the laws of purification. So now you understand the situation of both sides, at the time that Jesus Christ started out on his journey. Both sides needed to be taught a lesson.

Chapter 4 of John's Gospel opens up with a statement in verse 4 that Jesus Christ decided to go from where he was in Judea back to Galilee. There were two distinct route he could take.

The most common one for "so called righteous Jews" was via the Jordan Valley, which bypassed the area of the Samaritans. As explained above, the orthodox Jews did not like the Samaritans' attitudes, nor their brand of religion and they did not want to associate with them in any form or fashion. They did not even trade with them, if they could avoid doing so.

But the Scripture says the Jesus must go through Samaria. There was a divine reason for Him to go this path. He was a righteous Jew. His disciples would automatically expect that he take the path around Samaria, like all other orthodox Jews.

When Jesus had laid hands on his disciples and sent them out previously, he had told them only to go to their own people, not to go to the Samaritans, or to the Gentiles.

But here now was Jesus, taking the short-cut across Samaria, to get back to Galilee. I am sure that the disciples must have been a little puzzled by this decision, but were too shy to ask Jesus directly why He was going this way.

As they draw near to Samaria, Jesus sends His disciples on ahead to arrange for food for Him. So when he arrives at the well He is alone.

The well is situated in a field which Jacob purchased near Shechem (Gen: 33:18-19). It was in this field that the bones of Jacob were finally laid to rest, as recounted in Joshua 24.32. Jacob's well is still there today ! It is not a spring, but a well about 100 foot deep, in which water percolates and gathers.

It is at the sixth hour (approximately noon) when Jesus arrives at the well. Here we see that Jesus is a man, just like us. He has walked many miles, he is tired, hungry and thirsty, but there is no vessel in which to collect the water from the bottom of the 100 foot well. Jesus Christ now has two choices open to him:

Choice 1.

We have seen that He was able to change the water into wine. We have seen that He was able to calm the seas. All He has to do is order the water to come up out of the well and calm His thirst. If he had given such an order, the water would have obeyed, because it was the Word issued forth in the beginning, that created the universe, and all matter in the universe

must obey the Word of God. But would that use of God's power given glory to His Father in Heaven ? NO !!! Whenever Jesus Christ used His power on earth, it was ALWAYS FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S BENEFIT, NOT HIS OWN. Therefore the misuse of God's power was not an acceptable option open to Him.

"Though He was in the form of God, He humbled Himself to become a man like you and me." Phil 2:6-8) Jesus needed the woman to come to the well, so that He could show, by His own actions, what we need to do sometimes, that is let someone else do for us, what we know we could do for ourselves, so that they can receive God's blessings.

So Jesus Christ had to become a humble person and waited for someone to come to the well, who had a container to get the water from deep down inside the well. It is very easy for us to be proud and to give to others. But it really hurts our pride when we have to be dependant upon other, to receive from them.

Choice 2.

The Scripture says : It is better to Give than to Receive. Also it says, God will bless a cheerful giver. Consider this in the light of the sentence from the Lord's prayer : "Give us this day, our daily bread". We have to learn to be a receiver of someone else's giving. The most important aspect of this story is that the giving was in response to a direct commandment from the Lord. We have to be always sensitive to the Holy Spirit, so that we are able to :-

- hear the commandments from the Lord;
- respond immediately to that command;
- know that the Lord will honour His word, and that blessings will follow those who are obedient to His commandments. REMEMBER OBEDIENCE IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE. We have to learn also to receive gifts that the Lord has commanded other to give, TO US, so that they can receive their rightful blessings.

For example :-

A pastor is not supposed to receive a salary from his congregation. He is, like the Levites of old, dependant upon the congregation and their tithes for his daily bread. The tithes and offerings given by the church are to be available for the pastor to use. He may not use all of it, but the amount decided between the elders and the pastor should never make the difference between whether he accepts the job or not.

An ordained pastor works as God's own servant. God is responsible for providing for him. The more obedient he is to his calling, the more the Lord shall bless him. (Read Luke 6:38 and John 10:11-13) Jesus was practising what He had been preaching to His disciples when he sent them out to witness.

"Take nothing with you for your journey, neither staves, nor script, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them" (Luke 9:3-6)

God was about to bless a giver, the person who came to the well, if she gave Jesus water when He asked her for it. ("for whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward (here on earth, as well as in Heaven)). (Mark 9:41)

In the eastern cultures, it is a common site very early in the morning, between 6-9 am, to see the man of the house taking his cattle or goats out to the fields, or going to tend to the crops. At the same time, the women go out in the cool of the morning to the water wells, to gather water for the rest of the day. There they gossip and pass news from one family to another in a time of joyful sharing. Sometimes they sing folk songs, or songs of praise, in thanks to God for the well and the water, as they labour in pulling up the rope with the buckets containing 4-5 litres of water each time.

Each family may need up to 10 litres of water per day, which they balance in two pottery containers on their heads as they go back to the village. So it would be uncommon for a lady to be at the well at the middle of the day. There had to be a specific reason for this, so let us now examine the Scripture closely to find out the Divine reason.

Some pastor say that the woman who came to the well, had an incurable disease, like Leprosy. Therefore she was an outcast, and that is why she came to the well in the middle of the day. If this was the case, she would not have been allowed to even use the well to get water, because the Samaritans would have considered the water was polluted if she used it, if the woman indeed had leprosy.

Secondly if the woman has leprosy, the Lord would have healed her of her disease and she would have gone back into the village praising the Lord of her healing, a very different story than the one she eventually used.

Other pastors say that the woman was a prostitute, that is why she came to the well in the middle of the day, because she was up late entertaining her clients and did not get up early enough to come to the well, at the usual time with the other women. If this was the case, she would not have been allowed to even use the well to get water, because the Samaritans would have considered the water was polluted if she used it, if the woman was a prostitute, she would have been considered a sinner, an outcast, and not allowed to use the water from Jacob's well. If she had been a prostitute, then Jesus would have told her that her sins were forgiven, and to go away and sin no more. **BUT JESUS DID NONE OF THESE THINGS. !!!**

What He did do, crossed across all accepted customs of the times. It was to become a lesson for the whole nation. At that time, it was forbidden for a Jewish Rabbi to speak to a woman in public.

This was later proved by the surprise on the faces of his disciples, when they returned and saw Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman, a complete stranger. (read verse 27) Because of the belief of being made unclean, if an orthodox Jew shared the same water container as a gentile, or a Samaritan, to ask her for a drink of water was the second custom broken. Jesus looks carefully at the Samaritan woman. He is looking deep down into her spirit.

- He disregards her tiredness.
- He disregards the heat of the day and the physical exertion required to draw the water from 100 feet below.
- He also disregards the fact that she is a total stranger and that she is a hated Samaritan.

Jesus commands her to give him a drink of water.

The custom of that time does not allow for a strange man to speak to a woman in public. To do so brings shame and humiliation on the woman, and she who would run back to the menfolk of her own family and tell them what happened.

They immediately would require an apology from the offending man in question. If they did not get the apology, the man would be severely beaten, in some cases even killed. Only 2 types of women would answer a strange man in public :-

- a prostitute; or a prophetess.

We have already ruled out the first of these two, (the prostitute), so let us examine the possibility of the second.(a prophetess) The Samaritan woman replies to the command of Jesus.

(John 4:9) "How is it that thou, being a Jew askesth drink from me, which am a woman of Samaria? (YOU KNOW THAT) the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans".

Her response ignores that he commanded her to give him a drink of water, instead she replaces the command with a milder, more acceptable word request. At this moment she is not ready to accept that Jesus is indeed also a prophet.

The Samaritan woman is standing (unawares) before the Lord of Glory. But she, in her own flesh and understanding, is changing the command of Jesus into a request. We are often guilty of the same sort of things. (changing the commandments of the Lord, into small requests) Jesus could have revealed His identity to her immediately. He could have said "I am the Son of God, the one you have been waiting for". But Jesus likes people to learn things for themselves. He is never forceful. She has encountered a prophet (Jesus Christ) unawares.

The way she asks her question to Jesus reveals that she is a prophetess among her own people. Jesus now wants to start to stir up her faith. He wants to let her recognize Him for who He really is. (verse 10) [Amplified version] " ***If you only knew what a wonderful gift God has for you, and who I AM, you would ask me for some living water.***

Again Jesus could have revealed who He was, but again the woman misses the point of what He said, or is not yet ready to believe her good fortune. So the woman continues to question Him in the ways of a prophet. Notice she is not ashamed, to be talking to this complete stranger, she is in fact setting up a deeply religious dialogue with Him.

"But you don't have a rope or a bucket, and this is a very deep well. Where would you get this living water? Besides are you greater than our ancestor Jacob ?

How can you offer better water than this which he and his sons and their cattle enjoyed ?"

She recognizes that Jesus was indeed talking in parables, as do many prophets, but still she could not believe what He was saying to her. "If you knew the gift of God" Jesus Christ Himself is the gift of God. She is starting to suspect that maybe the man standing before her is the Messiah. This woman has had terrible tragedy throughout her life, she has lost 5 husbands. As divorce was very rare in those days, all of them probably died. This woman is used to bad news, to terrible tragedy.

To think that she has found the Messiah, is such wonderful news that her mind refuses to believe it, to comprehend it.

Her spirit starts to believe, but she is scared in her mind, to accept the complete truth of what she now perceives that Jesus is really saying to her "I AM, the living water", so she flees from the spiritual realm of a prophetess, back into the physical realm of an ordinary woman. "Sir please give me this water that I thirst not, neither come here to draw any more water."

NOTE : *[Many times in the Scriptures Jesus will meet with a person in the spiritual realm at their level of faith. In the case of Zechariah, the angel Gabriel delivered the Lord's message. In the mind of Zechariah was doubt, so a second sign (as proof from the Lord was necessary). He was made deaf and dumb until the birth of his promised son, John the Baptist took place. In the case of Mary, she accepted with humility the news given by the angel and it came to pass without any problems, or further confirmation necessary.]*

Jesus does not try to force her mind to understand, and to come into line with what her spirit already perceives to be correct. Instead, Jesus gives her a chance to flee from Him (in the physical realm, that she has now returned to). Jesus, using the gift of the Word of Wisdom, already knows that this lady is a widow, that she has no husband, so he says to her : "Go, call your husband and come back here."

Now if she wants to flee, here is her opportunity. The important thing is not that she answered Jesus, it is that she remained, to further question him and find out more. Her spirit is now trusting in the truth and it is awakening her mind

also to this same truth. She has decided to overcome her fears and find out for sure the revelations to be revealed to her, both good, or bad.

Real faith is a matter of what we do, not what we say or think. (James 2:18). Jesus told us to be doers of His Word, not hearers only. Now her faith is starting to come into action. Instead of leaving, she answers Jesus with the truth. "I do not have a husband". ***"Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that thou hast said truly."*** Jesus now reveals to her that he can see into her life. He now reveals to her that he is a real prophet.

Many people have misinterpreted the answer of Jesus, because they do not understand the culture or the customs of the times. They thought that Jesus was accusing her of being a wicked woman, but this was not the case.

The Old Testament law (Deut. 25:5) required that a widow's brother-in-law succeed her husband, if she was childless, so as to guarantee an heir. This is clearly shown in the example of the widow Ruth. Boaz could not marry her, until first relative - the brother-in-law Elimelech, refused to fulfil his obligations under the law.

In truth, the woman at the well did indeed have five husbands and each of them had died. The sixth relative has taken her into his household in accordance with the Old Testament law, where she will be closely guarded and chaperoned by many of their relatives, until a new marriage could be arranged.

If a woman was not married, or lost a husband, she was thought to be cursed of God refer to (Isa. 4:1). If she subsequently re-married and lost a second husband, she was considered doubly cursed.

However, if she lost a third, fourth and fifth husband, the people began to realize that the Lord was preparing her for high office of service to her people as a prophetess.

A prophetess could talk to men, or women in public. Everybody came to them for counsel. They were God's chosen servants, a different set of rules applied. There was no shame for a stranger to talk to a prophetess in public, nor for a man or woman of the village to enquire of her the Lord's will for their lives.

The answer that Jesus gave back to the woman at the well, bore no reproach. It bore no condemnation whatsoever. In fact it revealed to her that he knew who she was, that he acknowledged her as a prophetess. he knew of her suffering, her inner pains, but also He knew of the work she had done for the Lord since she became a prophetess. Now Jesus has given her 2 signs:

- a) His direct command for a drink of water;
- b) His revelation about her life;

But Jesus wants to reveal more to her. Again she is reluctant to accept the reality of the truth that Jesus has revealed to her, and asks of him a direct question.

(Verse 20) ***"Our fathers worshipped in the mountain, and you (a Jew) say Jerusalem is the place we should worship."***

She is challenging Jesus (as a prophet) to solve this spiritual question. Jesus must use the limit of faith she has to reveal to her the real situation. Jesus has to use whatever faith level the person has, as ground upon which to build. This is the only way to meet a person at their level of faith !!! Jesus starts from this point and then builds upon it. Paul explained this in (1. Cor. 9:19:22) You must be prepared to be at different levels for all men, so that you can win their souls.

(Verse 23) ***"A time will come, however, indeed it is already here, when the true (genuine) worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: (not at Jerusalem, nor in this mountain), for the Father is seeking just such people as these as his (true) worshippers"***

By giving the woman at the well this new revelation about the Scriptures, Jesus is indeed revealing to her that He is more than a Prophet. (but can she accept this?) HIS HOLY PRESENCE IS ALREADY FLOODING OVER HER SPIRIT.

Gone from her now is any thought of fleeing from His presence. She suspects that He is the Messiah, but she will not come out with the question directly - as a prophetess should, but reverts to the polite indirect ways of the eastern culture.

(Verse 25) ***"I know that the Messiah cometh, which is called the Christ: when He is come He will tell us all things"***. She confirms her faith in the promises of the Prophets.

Jesus has come as the Messiah, but more than the Messiah. He has come as the Son of God. The Jewish community did not recognize Him as this, even though the prophets of old had proclaimed it as such. Jesus now gives her the third and this time a MAJOR SIGN.

(verse 26) Jesus said to her: ***"I that am speaking to you now am He"*** Jesus has revealed Himself to her in all His Glory. The Holy Spirit quickly confirms this to her.

When the disciples return (verse 27) they are amazed to see Jesus speaking to a woman in public. but they do not question the woman, nor do they ask Jesus the reason for this. This is another clear sign to her of his position and authority over the disciples.

This same situation must exist in the world today. People must see (by our examples as Christians) that the Lord is indeed in authority over us.

It has been said that Mahatma Ghandi was quoted as saying: " I would accept your Christ as my Saviour, if it was not for the bad example of all the Christians I see."

But back to the woman at the well. She is now so excited, she cannot keep this news to herself, she must share it with the whole village.

She confirms her belief to Jesus, by leaving her water pot at the well and running off to spread the news in the village. To the eastern culture, water is sacred. It is a sign of life. A water pot was a treasured possession. If one was broken, tragedy struck a household. The pieces were not thrown away. The larger pieces were used as serving bowls or dishes.

The fact that she left her water pot at the well is a very significant sign to Jesus. It means that she believes and that she will return, to claim her reward. She quickly goes off to the village to tell them the good news.

But as a prophetess again, she does not force this revelation upon them. She must draw them to the well, and let the Holy Spirit reveal the truth to each of them individually.

When she goes back into the town she tells the people to go to the well. ***"for there they will find a man which told her all about her life."*** If she was not a respected person in the village, the people would have ignored her. They would not have gone out to meet Jesus.

The fact that she was recognized by the people of the village as a prophetess placed more weight on her words, when she revealed to them, that there was one who knew the complete life of their prophetess. Indeed he must be a great prophet indeed. They went because she was their prophetess. They believed because Jesus awakened their own individual faith to the spiritual truth of who He really was. This is why the villages replied to the prophetess later, after Jesus had stayed with them for 2 days.

(Verse 42) ***"And they told the woman: Now we no longer believe (trust, have faith) just because of what you said; for we have heard Him ourselves - personally; and we know (without any doubt) that He truly is the Saviour of the world. the Christ."***

The story of the woman at the well is a story of faith. It is a story that we should all carefully examine and learn from, because it could happen to anyone of us, at anytime.

A person, a complete stranger, could talk to you in the street, and he/she could have a message from God for you. Learn to listen carefully to what other people have to say. Don't be impatient with them, because it may be an opportunity lost for you forever.

In this case not only would the prophetess not have received the revelation about who the stranger (Jesus Christ) really was - but the whole village would also have lost their subsequent blessings. In view of this, your actions can sometimes have drastic effects on others around you. Please consider this in future.

31st December 1997

Do Miracles Still Happen Today ?

Many people have heard about what has happened overseas in Papua New Guinea. Some of you have gone there and seen it for yourselves, and you know that God is alive and He is moving across the world, putting into place His plan for the salvation of mankind. Others have remained here in Australia and are a little sceptical about what you hear and what other people have seen.

Tonight I want to talk about God's Word and ask you a question : Do you believe Miracles still happen today ? Many of you do not question that miracles have happened in the past. You could probably name several miraculous accounts that you have heard in Sunday school, or have read in the Scriptures.

- Things like the 10 plagues of Egypt - when Moses went to confront the Pharaoh and ask him to let the people of Israel go.
- The parting of the Red Sea, when Moses took the people across and how it drowned all the Egyptians when they tried to cross.
- Elijah providing food for the widow woman and her son during the drought.
- Elijah praying for the same widow's son to be brought back to life.
- Elisha praying for the life of the Shunamite woman's son.
- Jesus praying for Lazarus to be raised from the dead.
- Saul meeting Jesus face to face on the Damascus Road and how it dramatically changed his life, and the life of millions of other people through his ministry.

Many of you have seen me in this church over the last 12-18 months, but do you really know about my life ? Tonight I want to take you back to 16th June 1969, when in Melbourne I was involved in a traffic accident and my neck was broken. I was paralysed from the neck down and the doctors said I would never walk again.

For three months I lay in that hospital bed unable to do anything for myself - completely paralysed from the neck down. At that time I was not a Christian - in fact I did not even know if God existed. But when you are told that you will never walk again, you will try anything to receive a healing.

I cried out to God a simple prayer. "God if you are really there - heal me and I will serve you for the rest of my life". It was a prayer of desperation - the wrong type of prayer to make - You see, you are not supposed to make deals with God Almighty. But God is merciful - God is gracious, God meets you at your level of faith - He meets you at your level of understanding - however small it may be at the time.

Over the next 6 weeks I started to get feeling back into my fingers, then my arms, my legs and finally my whole body. All this time the doctors in the hospital were telling me not to get my hopes up - I was paralysed and I would always be paralysed - I would never walk again. Don't put your hopes in these muscle spasms - they will go away.

When I got up off that bed in the hospital in September 1969 and started to walk again, the doctors could not say that I was paralysed any longer. God Almighty had heard my prayer and through the blood of Jesus Christ my old life was made new.

The Scripture says that by His stripes we are healed. I know this to be a fact in my life. The Healing power of God worked a miracle in my own life and I have been preaching in over 40 countries around the world to proclaim that God's Word is true. But let us go back to the Word and see why miracles should happen today .

In Joel chapter 2 God confirms His presence to the nation of Israel and He promises to replace all the goods which have been taken from the nation.

◆ In Joel 2:27 God says : *"And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel and the I, the Lord, am your God, and there is no-one else. My people shall never be put to shame."*

◆ Then there is a time change in the Scriptures in verse 2:28. which we need to see and understand.

In Joel 2:28-32 God says : *"And afterwards I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. Even upon my menservants and my maidservants in those days will I pour out My Spirit. And I will show signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke."*

◆ And after what special event will this occur ?

◆ Peter under the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit recognised that the prophesy was coming into effect and He was able to relate this back to the events which had occurred in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

◆ Will it be restricted to Jews only ? No. - the Word tells us that this tremendous gift will become available to ALL FLESH !!!

◆ The Scripture goes on to tell us that young men shall see visions.

◆ I like this part of the Scripture because here God is giving the power to see the future to the next generation of believers in the community. God will give the power of visions to the young men.

◆ Through the last 10 years the Holy Spirit has been slowly moving across the Asian nations, commencing first in Singapore, then Malaysia, through Thailand then splitting and going north-west towards Burma and Laos, and North-east towards Vietnam, Cambodia and China.

◆ Wherever the Holy Spirit goes there are signs and miracles which follow, because that is the confirmation that God is working in the midst of His people.

◆ In the last chapter of The Gospel of Mark Jesus gives His instructions to the disciples and it is recorded this way :-

Mark 16:14-20 says : *"Afterwards He appeared to the eleven [apostles themselves] as they were reclining at table; and He reproveth them and He reproached them for their unbelief (their lack of faith) and their hardness of heart, because they had refused to believe those who had seen Him and looked at Him attentively after He was risen from the dead.*

And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach and publish openly the good news (the gospel) to every creature.

He who believes - that is who adheres to and trusts in and relies upon the Gospel and Him whom it sets forth - and is baptised will be saved from the penalty of eternal death; but he who does not believe - who does not adhere to and trust in and rely upon the gospel and Him whom it sets forth - will be condemned.

And these attesting signs will accompany those who believe : in My name they will drive out demons: they will speak with new languages.

They will pick up serpents, and even if they drink anything deadly; it will not harm them; they will lay their hands on the sick and they will get well.

So then the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and He sat down at the right hand of God.

And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord kept working with them and confirming the message by the attesting signs and miracles that closely accompanied it (the Word of God).

- ◆ We know that Peter was able to perform miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, so were many other of the disciples - but what about today ?
- ◆ The Word says that God will confirm His word with attesting signs and miracles. We have to be ready to receive God's Word and be ready and expectant to see His miracles being worked in this day and age.
- ◆ In April of 1987 a group of about 20 people from Thailand went to Singapore to the 6th Asian Convention of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship. There were about 1000 delegates who came from many nations around the world to hear what the guest speakers had to say.
- ◆ The speakers were Derek Prince and Ruth Prince from the USA, Joe Popell from Taiwan and many others.
- ◆ Derek Prince is a man who has spent the last 70 years preaching about Jesus Christ. He started out as a person who did not believe in Christ - but God changed all that. He now preaches in many different Chinese dialects into mainland China for several hours each day and his set of teaching notes called the foundation series are used in many bible colleges and theological seminaries around the world in different languages.
- ◆ Joe Popell was called by God to go to Taiwan and start up a church there. He did not know how or why, but he was obedient to the call of God on His life. When He came to this convention he told us that the church he started had more than 10,000 members and was growing daily.
- ◆ Joe was asked to pray for healing for a man who was deaf and dumb since birth. He did not refuse - he just told everybody that God was the one who performed miracles and all we had to do was ask Him to do them.
- ◆ First he put his 2 little fingers into the deaf man's ears and prayed for the Lord to remove the spirit of deafness which was on the person. He then took a watch out of his pocket and held it about 3 feet from the side of the man's head, and through a person doing sign language asked if he could hear anything ?
- ◆ The response He nodded his head: HALLELULYAH !!! He then put the watch on the other side and again asked if he could hear anything ? Again he nodded his head.
- ◆ Now this man has never heard or said anything since birth and so through the sign language he was told that we would teach him his first word and so slowly the syllables came : HA - LE - LUL - YAH .
- ◆ When that man said halleluia, the whole place, with more than 1,000 people erupted into clapping, shouting and praising God.
- ◆ **The news spread through Singapore like fire.**
- ◆ The next evening a whole family came - they were deaf and dumb since birth. The father through sign language told Joe Popell that His wife and himself were old - but would he please pray for his children to receive their speech and their hearing.
- ◆ One by one the children received their hearing and their speech. At the end Joe Popell called up the husband and wife who were in tears and asked them if they would like to receive healing as well.
- ◆ That night a whole family was miraculously healed from deafness and dumbness. God confirms His Word with signs and wonders.
- ◆ Later in 1987 we met Nora Lamb, a Chinese Christian who refused to denounce Jesus Christ and join the Chinese Communist party.
- ◆ She was sentenced to death by firing squad. Three times they took aim and fired and three times God intervened in a miraculous way and stopped the bullets from hitting her. This so perplexed the captain of the guard that he asked

her ***“Why do I see a bright light come down from above between me and you when I give the order for the soldiers to fire” ?***

- ◆ She was able to explain that God had intervened and that she was not to die at the hands of the Chinese Communists. She was later exiled out of China. She now has a strong evangelical ministry to Chinese people throughout the world.
- ◆ Throughout my time of missionary work, in many countries over the last 18 years, God has provided for us. We have been in a faith mission situation trusting God for a job, a place to stay- everything.
- ◆ He provides the income to allow us to prepare Christian books, Christian teaching tapes, videos and the money for fares and transport costs, to allows us to spread His word through many nations.
- ◆ Rani and I have had the privilege to see more than 15,000 people make a commitment to Jesus Christ in the 19 years we have been married.
- ◆ We have also seen how these people have gone on with their Christian walk - getting married and bringing up their children in the knowledge and discipline of our Lord.
- ◆ I believe that this church - The Bethel Christian Centre, has a special place in God’s heart, and that He wants the people of this church to be expecting miracles to happen amongst us on a daily basis.
- ◆ As God provides for the younger generation to see visions, I feel that God wants to encourage each and everyone of you to draw closer to Him - so that He can impart to you His vision for your life and the lives of others.
- ◆ He wants you to have the very best in life - without fear, persecution, or abuse.
- ◆ God is able to perform miracles in the hearts of people today - just like He did at the time when Jesus walked the earth, or after Pentecost when the apostles went throughout the lands spreading God’s Word.
- ◆ Today you have an opportunity to plug-in to God.
- ◆ Today you have an opportunity to ask God what He wants you to do with your life.
- ◆ This is the hour when God can change the rest of your life. Are you going to let it pass you by ???
- ◆ Let us pray !!!

29/10/97

In Heaven It Maybe Hell For Some People

Firstly today, I want to get some simple answers from you the congregation as we start this sermon. Hands up all who believe there will come a time in the future when Jesus will return to the earth - to His kingdom and take up residence here ? Some of you have put up your hands – good!!! You will notice I did not say that Jesus was coming again to establish His kingdom here on the earth - but rather to take up residence in it again.

Why the distinction between the two ? Well that answer will be obvious to many of you already. If Jesus has to come again to establish His Kingdom on the earth - then it means that His kingdom does not exist on earth at the moment. This means that Jesus is not in control - Jesus did not defeat satan. But you say - Hang on a minute. We all know that Jesus conquered death, preached to the unsaved in hell, rose from the grave and was victorious over satan, placing Him under His feet forever. If you believe this, then the Kingdom of Heaven must already exist here on earth today.

When we pray the Lord’s prayer we are in fact proclaiming this fact when we say : ***“Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth (as it already is being done) in Heaven”***.

When we accept Jesus Christ into our hearts, the kingdom of heaven exists here on earth. Whether we are good examples of this kingdom depends on whether we allow God’s will to be done in our hearts - as it already is being done in heaven. But more importantly, I want to ask you what you think we are going to be doing when Jesus returns to earth for 1,000 years and then later when we go to be with Him forever.

The Scriptures tells us that we are ***“Joint-heirs with Jesus”***, that we are going to ***“rule & reign with Him”***. But how are we going to do this and what law are we going to use to rule the universe with?

I believe that the law we use to rule the universe will be the law of God's Love, and that we are here on earth now (in an apprenticeship) learning how to love others, with the love of God, so that we can do it with Him.

So, have you been exhibiting God's love to your friends lately? "Of course", you say – that's easy. It is very easy to exhibit God's love to your friends – but it maybe a little more difficult to exhibit God's love to you enemies. The Scriptures say that we are to "love our enemies" – to heap coals on love onto their heads, so that people who start out as enemies, become our friends.

As they see the love poured out upon them, the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts, to make them aware of God's truth in their hearts. Even enemies like the Taliban can become friends if the love of Jesus is exhibited in their presence, despite their actions.

Remember, Jesus Christ never lost a battle. His miracles endureth forever.

3/02/98

GRACE

Pastor Mike has told you repeatedly that he has a vision for this church to be a "GRACE" church. Well, today I want to challenge you to decide what type of "**Grace Christian**" you want to become. You will notice up on the stage I have set out 5 chairs and the letters on each chair spell out G-R-A-C-E. Let us look at each of these chairs individually and see what the letter stands for.

1. Let us first start with the letter "G".

There are some Christians who quote the Scripture : "by "**Grace**" I am saved - through faith" - so that's that.

- I don't have to do anymore - Jesus has done it all.
- The victory is already won - satan is defeated. HALLELULYAH !!!
- I can just sit back and wait until Jesus comes again and takes me home to be with Him.
- I have a guaranteed place in Heaven - just waiting for me.

They also love to quote the Scripture where Paul is told that : "My "**Grace**" is sufficient for thee".

- They say : - if its good enough for Paul, its good enough for me.
- So they become "**Grace Christians**" - sitting in the "**Grace**" chair for the rest of their lives.
- They don't do anything for Jesus Christ.
- They don't study His Word - they just take - take - take.
- They forget the Scripture which says : "It is better to give than to receive."
- They have received Grace from Jesus Christ - but have given nothing in return.
- You will notice the person sitting in the "**GRACE CHAIR**" is wearing a nappy - because these type of Christians are in fact still "**spiritual babies in Christ**" - they need to grow up !!!

2. Next let us examine the "R" chair.

After a person accepts the "Grace" of Jesus Christ, there needs to be a physical and spiritual change in their lifestyles. The old self is to "**pass away**" a new life has begun.

- The person is "**Reborn**" with Christ, The old self is "**Replaced**". A new life is "**Resurrected**" with Christ.
- The "R" chair person has a desire to become "**Righteous & Holy**". Because they "**Read in the Scriptures**" that we are commanded to be Holy because the Lord is Holy. We are to be "**Righteous**" because the Lord is "Righteous".
- The "R" chair person has a desire to "**Read the Scriptures**" - to get a better understanding of who he is - what is his "**Relationship to God**" and his "**Relationship to his fellow believers**".
- The "R" chair person has a desire to "**Reach out to others**" - but as yet does not really know how to do so. The "R" chair person is one who wants to put his limited knowledge into "Action" but as yet, does not know how to do so.
- "Action without knowledge can be dangerous !!!

3. Let us now look at the “A” chair

- The “A” chair person has a desire to be a person of “Action”.
- They must go out and **Do something for Jesus.**
- They have some knowledge and they want to “act on it.”
- Unfortunately, without correct direction or guidance, this type of “action” can do more harm than good.
- The “A” chair person has to learn under whose “**Authority**” they are to act. Their whole being - and all their actions, must be to glorify Jesus Christ and to do the things that He instructed us to do.
- The “A” chair person must learn to **“Activate the Authority of Jesus Christ into Action”.**

4. Now comes the “C” Chair.

- If you have come this far, you will realise that for Jesus Christ to save us, there was a “COST”. **Jesus Christ had to freely give up His life for us.**
- **Now it is our turn to count the cost of becoming a Christian. !!!**
- What amount of our time, our money, our energy, are we prepared to freely give up for our Lord, so that we can be made “**Complete**” in Him.”
- If you are led by God Almighty to go to India, like Mother Teresa, and work among the dying and the destitute - are you prepared to drop everything and go ?
- Or if you are called - are you prepared to go to the Northern Territory and work among the Aboriginal people - to show them God cares for them - despite what the “white fella” has done to them during the last 200 years ?
- What about going around Coffs Harbour every night in a “Paddy wagon”, picking up the drunks, the drug addicts, the homeless, giving them a place to sleep, food in the mornings, maybe a change of clothes, a place to have a wash, a shave, or a haircut ?
- Or is it below your dignity, to have these dirty, smelly, people in your lovely clean houses ?
- We are now getting down to the “Nitty Gritty” of what it means to become a “Grace Church”. This is what it means when Jesus says that we are to love each other - without discrimination - without prejudice, because we are all equal in His sight.
- Jesus Christ loves every sinner. If He did not, then there was no chance that we would be able to come into His presence - we were just as bad “in His eyes” as these people are who I have just described.
- If we believe that Jesus Christ has saved us - **then we cannot turn our backs on any of God’s creation - irrespective of their background - their race - their colour - their present religious beliefs - or their present circumstances.**
- “C” Chair people have to learn to “Count the Cost” and become “Caring People”.

5. Now finally, let us look at the “E” Chair people

If you have reached the stage of Christian “**Evolution**” you will have learnt that to be sitting in the “E” chair is not good enough.

Burning deep into your heart is the desire that “**EVERYONE**” should hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You have reached a stage in your “**Earthly walk with the Lord**” where you have come to realise that nothing belongs to you anymore. You are just a custodian of the riches that Jesus Christ has bestowed upon you.

WITH GOD’S HELP, You now want to do “**EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER**” to spread His Word wherever and whenever the opportunity arises. Your motto has become “**EVERYTHING FOR JESUS**”.

Some of you may recall that late last year before I went to Pakistan I shared that I thought the Lord was directing us to consider the following statement :-

“First be reconciled to God - then you can become reconciled to one another.” This morning I lay out before you this same challenge. **“First be reconciled to God - then you can become reconciled to one another.”**

Once you have understood this statement fully, then I want to go on and further challenge you with the 5 chairs I have placed up on the stage before you. Examine your hearts - examine your attitudes - examine your lifestyles.

- Look at the 5 chairs, remember what I have said about each of them, and then decide which chair you are presently sitting in.
- It is for you and you alone to decide how much you care about your own salvation.
- It is for you and you alone to decide how much effort you want to make to spread God’s word throughout this nation.
- The choice is yours - I challenge all of you to make a commitment to sit in the “E” chair.

- Let me tell you there is plenty of room for all of us to sit on the “E” chair - if we really want to put God first in our lives and into the lives of others around us.

Let us pray.

1/2/00

What Does Galatians 2:9 Really Mean ???

In quoting Gal. 2:9 as the reference Scripture, and as the basis for Church Membership, in which is quoted a saying from Man “May these new people be a blessing to us and we a blessing to them, and may we go out and be a blessing to others” I feel is taking a completely wrong understanding of this Scripture and taking it completely out of context.

More importantly, it does not interpret the Scripture in line with the rest of Galatians, what Paul is trying to say to the Jewish Pillars of the Jewish Church, nor why this meeting was even necessary.

Let us look at what has transpired up until this point and draw some Scriptural lessons from the Word – not from man.

Thompson Chain Reference and other reference Bibles indicate that Galatians was written by Apostle Paul between the years 55-60 AD. This means that the “Church in Jerusalem” had already been in operation for over 20 years.

The Holy Spirit had revealed to the Church in Jerusalem the need for a division of labour inside the Church - the Apostles being responsible for the “spiritual well being of the congregation”, and the appointment of “Elders” for the administration of the day-to-day operation of the financial and administrative functions of the church.

Nowhere in the Scriptures up until this point of time (as recorded in Galatians 2:9) is there any reference, or the need for individuals within the Jewish congregation to extend the “right-hand of Fellowship” to others who get saved and now wish to belong to this church.

If the interpretation which is placed upon this Scripture (today by some churches) was in fact a “true interpretation” of this situation inside the early church, then it would have been revealed to the Apostles of the Jewish Church (within the first 20 years of its operation) that this was a necessary requirement of all new believers who wished to “belong” to the “Jerusalem Church”. Why? Because God has promised us that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.

Evidence in Acts is clear that there was some parts of the Jewish congregation in Jerusalem (and in other places throughout the known empire at that time) who were still against the teaching, preaching & miracles of Paul at the time he returned to Jerusalem (after being away from the city for 14 years).

Paul & Barnabas deliver their testimonies to the three notable leaders within the Jerusalem church : namely James (the brother of Jesus), Cephas (Peter) and John. It is stated that it is the Holy Spirit, working in these three “pillars of the church” who perceive the grace & calling of God, given to Paul & Barnabas to minister to Gentiles, is the same grace & calling of God, given to the Apostles in Jerusalem, to minister to the Jewish believers.

The offering of the Hand of fellowship, was in fact recognition of the joint partnership that existed amongst them all. The three pillars acknowledged that there was a genuine Calling of God upon the lives of Barnabas & Paul to **witness, minister and preach amongst the Gentiles** – whilst Paul & Barnabas acknowledged that there was a genuine calling of God upon the lives of the 3 pillars within the Jerusalem church, **to witness, minister & preach amongst the Jewish residents in Israel and beyond.**

As per Jewish & Arabic custom : by clasping right hands, they were :

- Acknowledging complete trust in one another – remember the right hand was used for wielding the sword , club, or knife.
- Agreeing that God was in control of this situation, that each was undertaking his own particular ministry and giftedness, for the common good of the Body of Christ and to spread God’s word far and wide, in harmony and unison.

The Scripture states that God confirms His word in 2 or 3 places in the Scriptures. If the interpretation of Gal. 2:9 relates to “legal membership” of a body of believers, then it must be confirmed elsewhere in the Scriptures. Unfortunately I have been unable to find it.

I think the present explanation about the reasons for accepting membership into the church is incorrect. The reasoning is as follows :-

Our primary responsibility is to preach the word to all around us, using whatever giftedness has been displayed among the body of Christ in this locality. This means direction and vision from within the leadership (Apostles), application and implementation plans from the (eldership), and action into being by all participants of the congregation, in one accord.

When we extend the “right hand of fellowship” to a new member, we are in fact saying this : We have searched his/her character and found that there exists a call of God upon their lives, that they are also part of the Body of Christ and that they are being welcomed into a partnership of goals and purposes, which will bring glory & honour to God.

In accepting the “right hand of fellowship” the new member is stating (from his/her perspective) that he/she has looked at the specific Christian Community, has recognized that there is a specific corporate calling of God on the church, that they agree with that calling and that they want to be a part of this vision, offering their giftedness and God-given talents to the Body of Christ, working together in partnership to glorify God, in and through the joint commitment being undertaken by this ceremony.

It is interesting to note that nowhere else in the NT Scriptures was this ceremony referred to by any other writer, or is it recorded that any other disciple, elder or Apostle followed this procedure in the early church, right up until Revelations in 70 AD.

We must be extremely careful that we don't let legal requirements (dictated by state laws) place the wrong emphasis upon a Scriptural reference and take it out of context and give it more weight and incorrect weight. We come back to the saying of Jesus : what belongs to Caesar is Caesar's : what belongs to God is God's.

Gal. 2:9 recognizes that God is in control and is working His miracles in individual's lives, for His plan of salvation to be spread amongst the nations. The “hand of partnership” is a direct outward acknowledgement of this revelation. Don't let us confuse this “spiritual revelation” with worldly requirements caused by the “incorporation of a legal entity.”

20th February 2000

Communion

The Word “COMMUNION”² appears only four (4) times in three verses – all of these appearances in the New Testament, in books written by Apostle Paul.

1.COR. 10:16: *“The cup of blessing (of wine at the Lord's Supper) upon which we ask (God's) blessing, does it not mean (that in drinking it) we participate in and share a fellowship (a communion) in the blood of Christ, the Messiah? The bread that we eat, does it not mean (that in eating it) we participate in and share a fellowship (a communion) in the body of Christ?”*

2.COR. 6:14: *“Do not be unequally yoked up with unbelievers – do not make mismatched alliances with them, or come under a different yoke with them (inconsistent with your faith). For what partnership have right living and right standing with God, with iniquity and lawlessness? Or how can light fellowship (have communion) with darkness?”*

2. COR. 13:14: *“The grace (favour and spiritual blessing) of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the presence and fellowship (the communion and sharing together, and participation) in the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen – so be it.”*

So the Scriptures tell us that when we come together, we are indeed coming together to enter into a “PARTNERSHIP”, with one another, to “COMMUNICATE” with one another, and to “COMMUNICATE” with God the Father, with Christ, and with the Holy Spirit.

Notice that in all the 27 books of the New Testament, it is only Apostle Paul who makes mention of this word “communion.” It is only Paul who sees how important this spiritual relationship is, that he considers it necessary to record it three times in his writings.

Notice in the first Scripture (1 Cor. 10:16) that Paul mentions the Blood (the wine) first, (just like Luke does in the Gospel of Luke) because he recognizes that it is the blood which brings forth the new covenant, the promise after death

² **Hebrew/Greek Dictionary No:** 2842. koinonia, koy-nohn-ee'-ah; **comes** from G2844; partnership, i.e. (lit.) participation, or (social) intercourse, or (pecuniary) benefaction :- (to) communicate(-ation), communion, (contri-), distribution, fellowship.

- the partnership with God which will be for eternity. Also Paul is asking a question in his statements where he uses the word communion.

- Can we be in relationships, which are both good and evil and still please God?
- Can we participate in the Lord's supper, if we don't want to enter into this full commitment, a full relationship with Him forever ?
- Can we participate in the Lord's supper if we are not ready to have true spiritual fellowship with our Christian brothers & sisters ?
- A relationship with Christ infers a relationship with every other believer, firstly within this building, then within this city and finally within every nation.

This places a new importance on the meaning of "Communion." By participating in communion, we are publicly saying that we are going to be living examples of Christ here on earth, putting forth all His characteristics for the unbeliever to see – not entering into any alliance or agreement which does not bring glory and honour to Him, and recognizing that we are also achieving this by our communion (fellowship) & communication with and through the Holy Spirit.

So let us take up the elements as described by Paul in 1 Cor. 11: 23-26 ***"For I received from the Lord Himself that which I passed on to you – it was given to me personally; that the Lord Jesus on the night he was treacherously delivered up and while His betrayal was still in progress took bread.***

Yes, Jesus took part in the first communion service while Judas was betraying him. ***"And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said : "Take, eat" this is My body which is broken for you. Do this to call Me (affectionately) to remembrance" Similarly when supper was ended, He took the cup also, saying: "This cup is the new covenant (ratified and established) in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it. To call Me (affectionately) to remembrance. For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are representing, signifying and proclaiming the fact of the Lord's death (and resurrection) until He comes (again)"***

So let us pray, then eat the elements together.

28/02/00

The Covenant

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| (Luke 1:72 KJV) | To perform the mercy <i>promised</i> to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; |
| (Acts 3:25 KJV) | Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindred's of the earth be blessed. |
| (Acts 7:8 KJV) | And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so <i>Abraham</i> begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac <i>begat</i> Jacob; and Jacob <i>begat</i> the twelve patriarchs. |
| (Rom 11:27 KJV) | For this <i>is</i> my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. |
| (Gal 3:15 KJV) | Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though <i>it be</i> but a man's covenant, yet <i>if it be</i> confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. |
| (Gal 3:17 KJV) | And this I say, <i>that</i> the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. |
| (Heb 8:6 KJV) | But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. |
| (Heb 8:7 KJV) | For if that first <i>covenant</i> had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. |
| (Heb 8:8 KJV) | For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: |
| (Heb 8:9 KJV) | Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. |
| (Heb 8:10 KJV) | For this <i>is</i> the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: |
| (Heb 8:13 KJV) | In that he saith, A new <i>covenant</i> , he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old <i>is</i> ready to vanish away. |
| (Heb 9:1 KJV) | Then verily the first <i>covenant</i> had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. |

- (Heb 9:4 KJV) Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;
- (Heb 10:16 KJV) This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;
- (Heb 10:29 KJV) Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?
- (Heb 12:24 KJV) And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.
- (Heb 13:20 KJV) Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

The word “covenant” appears 292 times, in 272 verses in the Bible.

Hebrew/Greek Dictionary 1242. diatheke, dee-ath-ay'-kay; from G1303; prop. a disposition, i.e. (spec.) a contract (espec. a devisory will):--covenant, testament.

We know in the New Testament, that the shed Blood of Jesus Christ represents the “New Covenant” – a new disposition, a new contract, a new will, offered to us by God Almighty.

We also know that the New Covenant comes to replace the “Old Covenant” – because the word says so in :-

(Heb 8:7-13) New Contemporary English

“If the first agreement with God had been alright, there would not have been any need for another one. But the Lord found fault with it and said, “I tell you the time will come, when I will make a New Agreement with the people of Israel and the people of Judah. It won’t be like the agreement that I made with their ancestors, when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. They broke their agreement with Me, and I stopped caring about them!”

But now I tell the people of Israel this is My New Agreement: The time will come when I, the Lord, will write My laws on their minds and hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people. Not one of them will have to teach another to know Me, their Lord.

All of them will know Me, no matter who they are. I will treat them with kindness, even though they are wicked. I will surely forget their sins.”

When the Lord talks about a New Agreement, He means that the first one is out of date, (past its use-by date). And anything that is old and useless will be discarded and will soon disappear.

So do we want to follow something which is “out of date” or do we want to enter into the promises and the privileges of this New Agreement.? Anyone with any sense would say – If the Lord found fault with the Old Covenant - lets have the latest one – its for today – its what we need today!!

This new covenant is an everlasting covenant – with a lifetime guarantee. The rules are very simple: believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He was crucified for our individual sins, that He rose again and now sits as our advocate in heaven, at the right hand of God the Father, continually interceding for us. With His blood He has covered all our imperfections and failings, and all our sins.

This church has made a commitment: “To assist people to build a personal relationship with the living God that will last for eternity”. To do this effectively we must know, understand and put into practise, the things of God in our daily lives. When we partake in the New Covenant this morning, we are acknowledging that our old selves are passed away, all has become new, through the blood of Jesus Christ, and we are going to be:

- ◆ Living, walking examples of **Jesus Christ in this community,**
- ◆ Extending love, compassion and mercy **to all around us.**
- ◆ Always aware that other people’s needs are more important than our own,
- ◆ Prepared to give up our comfort zone, so that someone else may receive comfort,
- ◆ Prepared to pray when there is a need, to give our time and finances –when that is necessary.
- ◆ To actively participate in this church family, on a daily basis – not just on Sundays.

Jesus was out and about in the community, every day - meeting the needs of people every day. If we are to fulfil our covenant : “To assist people to build a personal relationship with the Living God that will last for eternity” we can do no less. We must get the revelation, that this is what Jesus wants us to do right here in Coffs Harbour also.

Let us pray.

28/3/00

The Faith Healers

(Rap style)

*I was walking down the street, in a kinda dream,
When I came across a site, an awesome scene,
There in the gutter was a terrible site, a junkie in rags, as high as a kite,
Should I walk on, or should I stay, should I help this man, should I help him today?
What should I do? I ask, I say? I know the needles are deadly these days.
So I say to the man: "can I help today"?*

*He looks at me and sneers and yells, "I don't need you, I need the shells,
That makes me rise and float and sing, that makes me feel just like a king".
I looked at him in great dismay, I wanted to help, to kneel, and pray,
To ask the Lord to do some scene, to wake him up, to make him clean.*

*"Oh Lord". I cried, "hear me today, right here in the gutter, oh Lord I pray,
Reach down your hand, give healing power, let this be for him, your finest hour".*

*He looks up at me with clear blue eyes, I know He's clean before he can rise,
He reaches out his skinny hands and gives me a hug as he tries to stand.
I don't know what it is I feel, but I do know that it is real.
I thank the Lord again today, that He is there when we pray,
It may not be a special scene, but the Lord knows and can intervene.
So don't get lazy, come what may, if you see a scene – ask God's help – just pray.
And He will honour your mercy and faith,
And true healing will come – that's just great. !!!*

28/3/00

At The Pearly Gates

[Drama]

Scene: At the pearly gates, at the entrance to heaven, where recent arrivals are checked out by St. Peter, to see if their names are in the "Lamb's Book of Life". Peter sends those whose names are missing out of God's presence, those whose names appear are then allowed into the "check-in area, pending final approval by the Lord Himself.

Props : A set of Entrance Gates, a desk, a large book, a "check-in" gate and "reject gate"

The Players :

The "Voice of God" : (Heard off-stage) actor not seen.

Jesus : The only one worthy to open the Book

Peter: Guard of the Pearly Gates & Keeper of the Holy Book

The Angel Helper: Who brings updates to be added to the Book

The motorbike rider: Recently arrived, as a result of a vehicle accident. – "There by accident"

The religious man: Who demands to be let in.

The humble man: Who claims to be unworthy to be let in

The widowed lady: Who suffered for the Lord here on earth

The agnostic: Who does not even believe the place exists

The narrator: Who will recount the story & challenge the congregation

Scene 1 :

Peter: Sitting at his desk, carefully polishing the Large book.

Enter

Angel Helper: Peter, here is an updated list, just off the throne-room computer, the latest group of believers. It will be great to see all these new faces, coming up here to worship and praise with us, when we are off-duty.

Peter: Yes, Praise the Lord. It is always great to know that God's work on earth is still going on – that people are spreading the Good News in all sorts of places.” Here, give me the list, so I can sort it and add it to the Book.

(Pause)

Are there any deletions this time ?

Angel Helper: No ! and thank God for that ! It is always so sad when we have to rub out a name from the Lamb's Book of Life”. I still don't understand why Jesus put that verse in the Holy Scriptures.

Peter: Don't worry about it – just do your duty, for the Lord knows everything and He must have very good reasons for putting that verse in the Scriptures.

Enter

The Motorbike Rider: He comes in looking for something, appearing very dazed and uncertain of himself.

Peter : Can I help you ?

Motorbike Rider : Have you seen me bike? I – I was riding down the highway, going 200 K an hour, then the next thing I remember is being here. Where am I anyway ?

Peter : You are at the gates of separation. Don't you remember skidding off the road and hitting that big tree ?

Motorbike Rider : Vaguely – but if I am here, does that mean I am dead? I don't want to be dead yet – I've too many things to finish for the Lord – you know, being in the God Squad and all that – mixing with the hard hats – spreading love and hope to all the bikies. Can't I go back and finish the job I started ?

Peter : It is not my decision whether you go or stay, that has already been decided. Remember, Jesus said He goes ahead to prepare a place for us. Let us look in the Book to see if you are registered to stay here and whether a room has been set aside for you.

Peter & the Motorbike Rider look in the pages of the book to see if they can find his name.

Peter: Are yes – there it is. You can go into the reception area to check-in.

Motor Bike Rider: ***Goes off through the door marked “Reception”***

Narrator: **These four are so busy listening and discussing their views that they have failed to recognize where they are.**

Enter the “religious man”, the “humble man”, the “widow” and the “agnostic” arguing amongst themselves.

Religious Man towards the others : **“I don’t care what you say, I know God exists!”**

How do you explain the life in a grain of wheat ? Can you show me how – with all the technology we have today, how to put life into a grain of wheat ? Can you do it? Do you know of any scientist who can do it? No ! See that explains it – God exists. He is the only one who can create things from nothing. That’s why I pray to Him each day. He is the creator and He is life.

Agnostic :

Your statement does make me think. No ! I don’t know anybody who can put life into a grain of wheat – or who can put life inside of each baby before it is born. I will agree that maybe there is a superior force, more powerful than I understand – but that does not give you the right to tell me that there is a place called Heaven – that’s just too much – that just a fairy story. Ha ! I don’t believe it.

Humble Man:

I must tell you that I did not believe in heaven either, some time ago - but I have seen God work miracles in people’s lives – so much so that I had to find out more about who God was, what was His purpose, and why He sent Jesus down to the earth to save worthless people like me.

I was so terrible, I used to go to the pub, get drunk, come home and beat the wife and kids, for almost any reason at all.

Then I had a confrontation with Jesus Christ. He asked me why I was doing this terrible thing. Didn’t I love my wife and children ? Didn’t I care for them ? Didn’t I want the children to grow up loving and respecting their father ?

It is a terrible thing when somebody reaches down inside of you and takes hold of your soul and puts it out in front of you – its like looking in a spiritual mirror.

I didn’t like what I saw – but Jesus helped my change my life, so that now I love my wife and my children. Why ? Because I found out that even though I was this terrible person – Jesus still loved me enough to die for me – even in my sins – even in this state that I was in.

- ◆ He replaced all my anger with His love. I don’t need to go down to the pub and get drunk every night.
- ◆ I don’t have to belt up my wife and kids – in fact I love them very much and they have a different response to me also.
- ◆ You see, God, in Jesus Christ, changed my life.

Agnostic (*looking around*) **Hey you guys ! Do any of you know where we are ?**

When I booked in at the travel agents to go on a mystery tour, I didn’t think I would end up in a spooky place like this – where are we ? Its spooky – but its kind of peaceful as well, don’t you think ?

Mutter of agreement

Widow:

I seem to remember, when I was a little girl in Sunday school being shown a picture of a place that looked just like this. It was called heaven’s gateway – the place where Jesus

came through to be with His Father. A place where all believers will pass, to spend eternity in heaven – but only if they have been obedient and have done the Father’s will.

Religious Man : No! I don’t agree with that statement – everybody shall be saved! Everybody shall go to Heaven !!! Remember the Scripture : All that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Anyway, if this is heaven – lets settle this once and for all – let us ask the gatekeeper over there – He should know. (walks towards Peter & the Helper Angel) Excuse me, can you help us? Is this Heaven?

Peter : No– this is not Heaven. This is the place of separation. This is the place where we check if people have their names registered in the Lamb’s Book of Life. This is the place where we separate the sheep from the goats – the believers from the unbelievers.

Agnostic : What happens if your name is missing from the book ? where do you go ???

Peter: You are sent through the gate marked “rejected” – never to be in the presence of God for eternity. Go now out of our presence.

Agnostic starts to walk away through the rejected gate

Religious Man: See ! I told you Heaven existed – but you would not believe me ! See ! You get what you deserve !! to live in hell forever !!!

- ◆ Me ! I am a religious man. I go to church every Sunday.
- ◆ I have never missed a meeting in the last 20 years.
- ◆ I am on several church committees.
- ◆ I spend many hours doing work for the church and
- ◆ I give lots of money to charities.
- ◆ I know that My Name will be in the Book

God’s Voice: *“Alas, its plain to see that those 20 years you have been sitting in the pews have all been wasted. Many times My word has been presented to you – many times you have heard the Words of My Son spoken in your presence :*

Jesus : *“Enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and spacious and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who are entering it. But the gate is narrow – contracted by pressure – and the way is straitened and compressed that leads to life, and few are they who find it.*

Beware of false prophets, who come to you dressed as sheep, but inside they are devouring wolves. You will fully recognise them by their fruits. Do people pick grapes from a thorn bush, or figs from thistles?

Even so, every healthy tree bears good fruit – worthy of admiration: but the sickly tree bears bad and worthless fruit.

A good tree cannot bear bad worthless fruit; nor can a bad diseased tree bear excellent fruit – worthy of admiration.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. Therefore you will know them by their fruits.

Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of MY Father Who is in Heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and driven out demons in Your name, and done mighty works in Your name ?

And then I will say to them openly (publicly), I never knew you: depart from Me: you who act wickedly – disregarding My commands”

Peter: *Close the Book. The time is coming soon now, when we will have to do the testing and final checking of each life. Move these people into the check-in area.*

Narrator:

There are many people who think that they can plan their lives and decide when, where, and how, they will meet their maker. But rest assured, whether we like it or not, each of us will be required to give an account of ourselves before the Father on judgment day.

- Which one of these people in this drama are you ?
- Are you sure that Jesus will open His arms and welcome you into His presence?
- Is your life today all of what it should be ?
- Have you been obedient to the Words of the Father?
- Have you been doing His will in your life?

If not, (today) we give you the opportunity to get your life right, and in order with God’s Word. Jesus told us that we are able to bring all our faults, hurts and failures to Him – to leave them at the cross, where His blood will cover them over, and they will be remembered in Heaven no more. Today is a time of decision for everyone.

- Committed Christians, nominal believers and unbelievers alike – all of us have decisions to make today. !!!
- I pray that each one will get down on their knees and pray for the Holy Spirit to awaken within them the fire of renewal and revival.
- To pray for new dynamic power, new spiritual energy to flow once again (or for the first time) through our veins.
- To get inspired for the Lord and for the promises that He has made available to us all.

Let us pray.

3/4/00

Story as told by Miss Roohi Philips

Where is the Heart of the Australian Government?

Three years now (2000) we have been sitting in Australia, hoping that the Immigration Department and the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) would protect us, have pity and compassion on us, and look impartially at what really is happening in my country. But now it looks like their hearts are made of rocks.

I really don't know what type of proof they need from us. They should go and look for themselves if they don't believe us. If they send us back and we get killed, ***then maybe they will believe us - but then it will have been too late for us.***

International evidence clearly indicates that persecution of Christians is taking place in our country - even Australian reporters & journalists have confirmed this in their published reports - but still the RRT and this Government won't listen, or take any action. What I need to know is this : If they were in my place and were being persecuted like I was, where would they go for help?

I know that Australia is a very peaceful country. We are not here for fun, or to enjoy ourselves on holidays. We have been working to support ourselves - we have not taken the Dole (Social Security payments) like some other cheats, or people who come into Australia by illegal means - who the Government allow to stay.

Nobody wants to leave their family unless they are forced into this situation. My family sent me out of my country for my own protection, to stop me being murdered, kidnapped, sexually molested, or even forced into marriage against my will. They sent me to Australia because they had heard that the Australian Government had protected many other women in similar situations like me, giving them shelter and protection.

This last 3 years seems like a 100 years to me without seeing my family back home. During those same 3 years my family back home has been destroyed - one by one they are dying and still this Government does nothing.

1. Two of my uncles have died suddenly.
2. My father was beaten up by Taliban extremists in his own home and he died of his injuries on the 25th February 1999.
3. Because of my fear of being attacked in this situation I was not able to even attend my own father's funeral.
4. My auntie (foster mother) who is worried sick about our safety is under so much stress that she has now developed Asthma and other sicknesses, resulting in hospitalisation several times.
5. Everytime she talks to us on the phone she is crying - because she wants to see us - but knows that it is unsafe for us to go back to visit her. Because her worry is so intense, she is getting worse and worse.

I hoped and prayed that the RRT would give us good news. They don't seem to understand what we are going through - us being separated from our family. If our bodies are torn with hurt and despair by being separated from our families - the RRT refuses to see any wounds.³

Because they are here in this peaceful country - in this peaceful environment, they have a system in place whereby they can make complaints, which are acknowledged, investigated and if necessary the culprits are brought to justice and punished. Because they have never been through this situation (or visited my country) they refuse to recognize that this is not the case in my country.

As I am a Christian, there is no avenue which I can use, because the police refuse to accept any complaints from Christians and the place is so corrupt that they "put the innocent in goal to protect the guilty".

It seems that even "first-hand evidence or accounts" does not matter to this Government. RRT seems to have already made up their minds - whether the evidence is there or not, - or they just don't understand the hurt we have suffered (and are still suffering) because we are afraid to return to our country.

Because of your slowness in making decisions here in Australia, my brother has not been able to see his wife, or any of his 3 children for more than 3 years.

If they (this Government) forces us to go back to our country where will we go? Our mother and our father are now both dead. Two of my uncles have also died and we cannot impose on the sole surviving auntie, as she is now very ill. We strongly believe that if you send us back to our country we will surely be killed.

If that is the case why don't you kill us here, instead of letting somebody else do this work for you. It seems that you are like Pontius Pilate, who wiped his hands in the case of Jesus Christ - not prepared to accept any responsibility for our safety.

Please remember that you are also family people. You have sons and daughters. What do you think you would feel if you were separated from them in a situation like us? Please let us die here, so our pain will be ended. Please don't send us back to be murdered by others.

16/6/00

Are you a Player or a Spectator ???

In the Message translation of Matthew's Gospel, Eugene Peterson gives out the message of God with a clear thump and places new emphasis on the role of Jesus in our society.

When John the Baptist came out of the desert, he preached a very simple message: ***"Change you life ! God's kingdom is here !"*** He was preaching and fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah, which says : ***"Thunder in the desert! Prepare for God's arrival ! Make the road smooth and straight !"***

We know that John was dressed in a camel's hair garment, tied at the waist with a piece of leather and he ate locusts & honey and he was a charismatic man, because thousands of people came out into the desert to meet him and to hear what he had to say.

He told them that they had gone outside the covenant God had given to Abraham, because of their sins and that they needed to :-

- ☐ confess their sins
- ☐ be baptised in the River Jordan (again)
- ☐ make a change in their lives, be seen to change their lives (by changed actions and attitudes), so that God could again bless them.

³ Now it is October 2004 and still the RRT and the Australian Govt. have not made a decision to allow me to stay in Australia. There appears to be no compassion in this country among Government officials.

John also saw that people came to be baptized because it had “become the fashionable thing to do”.

He challenged the Pharisees & Sadducees by telling them that a little water on their slithering snakeskins would not change them - or their lifestyle. ***“It’s your life that must change, not your skin”***

Claiming to be direct descendants of Abraham was not good enough either. That did not guarantee anyone a place in Heaven - Jesus said it would not then - and it still does not today. God does not have "grandchildren in Heaven" - only "brothers and sisters" - joint heirs with Jesus.

John summed up his ministry with this simple statement : ***“ I am baptizing you here in the river, handing in your old (sinful) life and making it ready for the new kingdom life”***.

He goes on to say an amazing revelation : ***“ The real action comes next !!! The main character in this drama will:***

- ☐ ***Ignite the kingdom life within you,***
- ☐ ***He will ignite a fire within you,***
- ☐ ***The Holy Spirit within you,***
- ☐ ***He will change you from the inside out.***
- ☐ ***He is going to clean house – make a clean sweep of your lives (from the inside out)***
- ☐ ***He will place every true thing in its proper place.***
- ☐ ***He will take every false thing and put it into the trash can to be burned.***
- ☐ ***He will start the re-construction of your life, ready for eternity."***

Some interesting things come out of this revelation. Let me use an illustration to explain:

During the last 2 weeks, the One-day cricket matches have been televised and there have been some very exciting matches. In the India versus Pakistan match, the result was not determined until the last ball was bowled. Many thousands of people around the world were watching, cheering and being on the edges of their seats, waiting to see who would win the match.

- ☐ However, it did not matter what we said or did - none of us changes to outcome of the match.
- ☐ Only the 10 members of the fielding team, the two batsmen and the three umpires had any direct involvement in that game.
- ☐ They were the only ones in the drama. The rest of us were just spectators.

The same applies to the effects of Jesus.

- ☐ Unless we are prepared to get involved in the drama – to let Jesus do His work in our lives, then being baptized is worthless.
- ☐ If we do not let Jesus come in and change our lives, we are no better than the Pharisees and Sadducees, who are just following a fashion. There was no change on the inside!

We must seriously ask ourselves this question : Are we players, or just spectators in this “Christian Game” ?

- ☐ Are we actively involved in letting Jesus sort out the true parts from the false parts ?
- ☐ Have we taken out the garbage bin lately - with all the trash in it to be burned ??
- ☐ Is there a noticeable change in our lives, since we were saved ?
- ☐ Is that change still continuing - or have we reached a plateau and we are in "cruise control" mode ?
- ☐ Have we stepped out of the drama and gone to sit with the spectators ?
- ☐ Where are we in the game ?
- ☐ Unfortunately, some of these questions may not be too popular.
- ☐ Well Jesus was not too popular with people who were not ready to change their lifestyles either.
- ☐ If these questions make you feel uncomfortable – Good !! the Holy Spirit is still alive inside you, waiting for an answer and an opportunity to get back to work.
- ☐ Are you ready to let Him ?

YOU HAVE TO BE IN THE DRAMA IF YOU WANT JESUS TO CHANGE YOU.

- ❑ It is not good enough to have a season ticket, to go to every game and sit and barrack for your favourite team – that will not change your life one little bit !!!

Therefore, the challenge is clear. Are you in the game – or just a spectator ??? This morning, I want everyone to have the opportunity to re-commit their lives to Jesus Christ – to ask Him to come in, and to re-commence the sorting out of the true things from the false things in our lives.

- ❑ Jesus want us to become Holy – just as He is Holy.
- ❑ Jesus want the Holy Spirit to be a burning light, a fire at full blast in our lives all the time – not just on Sundays.
- ❑ Jesus wants us to become His place of Habitation – not just a place He comes to visit occasionally.
- ❑ Where do you want Jesus to be in your life?
- ❑ In your life daily - just for an hour on Sundays -or only when there are trials and tribulations?
- ❑ Do you allow Jesus to be the steering wheel in your life- or just the spare wheel - which you put on everytime your life gets a flat?
- ❑ Today is a day of challenge. Today is a day of change. Today can change your life.
- ❑ Seize the opportunity. Have Jesus where He belongs - right in the middle of everything you say and do.
- ❑ It won't be easy - but it won't be boring either. **Let us pray!**

12/7/00

The Driving Instructor

Many Preachers and teachers have told us over the years that we have to move over and let Jesus Christ take the steering wheel of our lives, or that we have to let Jesus Christ take the rudder of our boats and let Him steer the course and we are follow.

Well that thought went right out of the window last weekend as the Lord revealed to me that He is in control - but it is our lives. We choose where we steer the course of our lives - it just depends on who is providing the input, and how we react to that input as we go about our daily lives.

Jesus wants us to adopt the attitude of being a "driver under instruction". We are legally in control of the vehicle, we steer it, we decide whether we observe the laws or not, it is we who decide what speed we travel and in what lane.

Jesus wants to be our instructor. He wants to guide us through each day, telling us where we should go, at what speed, in what lane and how far from the car in front and more particularly, what passengers we should have with us in the car as we go about our daily lives.

To do this effectively, we have to learn to attune our spiritual ears to His Voice - the voice of the Holy Spirit. If we cannot hear the Holy Spirit, then it is obvious that we will not hear His instructions and too late we will end up crashing into some obstacle (or trial), which could have been avoided.

If we have the wrong passengers in the car with us - like anger, lust, jealousy, lies, etc. then the Holy Spirit will not allow us to carry more important passengers in your car with us. Before we can carry "the gifts of the Spirit" as recorded in Galatians 5:22, in the car we must first actively get rid of the unwanted passengers.

We must tell the "Anger, Lust, Jealousy and Lies" to depart out of our lives "in Jesus Christ's name". Once we do this then the Holy Spirit can start actively removing them and opening the doors to allow the gifts of the Holy Spirit to enter and commence to do their work through us.

When we operate our lives under this concept - with guidance from the Holy Spirit, in everything we do then we receive blessings from God - why because He has promised them. He has promised to guide, protect and bless all those who walk in His footsteps and follow His commandments.

So we now have to examine how we are driving this "car of our lives". Who is in the driving seat and who is the instructor ?

- Are we listening to the things of the world which exist around us and driving based upon these things?
- Are we letting parts of our "old self" take control from "time to time" and cause us to steer a different course than we should ?
- Do we want Jesus to be blessed by the course we steer in our lives ?
- Then we must be prepare to constantly tune our spiritual ears to the Word and the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
- We must be prepared to be disciplined in our lives by spending time with the Lord - in His Word and in Prayer.

- Only then can He deal with the problems in our lives and keep us on the right path.

Well it's a new idea and a new way to understand God's leadings in our lives.

If The Lord Came Today

Jeffrey David Camm
25/10/00

If the Lord came back today, what now would we see,
Would the people recognise Him, go down on bended knee,
Would they cry out His name, rejoice and scream and shout,
Or would they turn their backs on Him, saying: "Throw this traitor out".
In times gone by, the Scriptures say, He was seen by many a man,
Peter, James & John saw Him and Mary Magdalene,
Thomas the doubter said : "You're my Lord & king",
500 were in the crowd, who saw and began the sing,
Paul on the Damascus road, heard Him with a shout,
It changed his life for all to see - for that there is no doubt,
But what of you and me, my friends, in this time of strife,
Does Jesus come to you each day, to help you change your life?
Do you cry out your praise, to Him, "Rejoice, live in peace,"
Or is it just a dream, does the longing for Him cease?
If Jesus came to church today, would you know His name?
Would you invite Him in, or hide with guilt and shame,
Would you cry out His name, in fear and dread and doubt,
Because you know for sure - your sins would find you out.
If Jesus came to church today, would you ask Him to preach - to pray,
Would you welcome Him with open arms, like the prodigal son and say,
"We love you Lord, with open hearts, we lift your Holy name,
Since you came into our lives, we have never been the same,
The gift of redeeming love, the Spirit and your name,
Have been rejoicing inside my head, my soul is all aflame,
" Oh Holy Spirit, come today, I do invite you in,
You live inside our temples - in our souls - within,
I see the Lord come inside this place, everytime I look at you,
Renewed, restored, forgiven. - I see - I know its true,
Rejoice today with me my friends, Jesus is here right now,
He dwells amongst His people, who pray and sing somehow,
We don't understand the mighty gift of love He gives so freely,
We only know we love Him so, we love Him all so dearly,
Just put your trust, your faith in Him, your path He'll show so clearly.
Its up to you - each one of you - to go - to speak - to show,
That Jesus came to church today, that this fact, you really know,
His love and forgiveness still abound, in this town of sin,
But we are free to serve our Lord, because He lives within.

23/4/00

Why did Jesus come, why did Jesus die ?

The Scriptures tell us in Isaiah chapter 7 that Jesus was to come, as a sign sent by God Almighty Himself, to show all of mankind that we could live a holy and just life – if we put our whole trust in Him, obeyed all of His laws and followed all of His ways.

But even if we did all of these things, there was still no way we could be in heaven for eternity, because this would have been achieved by our own efforts, and the scripture clearly tells us that we cannot boast of our own efforts.

(Eph 2:8 NIV)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

(Eph 2:9 NIV)

not by works, so that no one can boast.

(Eph 2:10 NIV)

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

1. Jesus came to show us the good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
2. Jesus came to show us the power of God Almighty through signs, miracles and wonders.
3. Jesus came to die for us, so that we could again be re-united with the Father for all eternity.
4. Jesus came to show us that He has power over sin & death.
5. Jesus came and went, so that we would have continual access to the Holy Spirit.
6. Jesus died so that the plan for the salvation of all nations could be put into place and be implemented by His believers throughout the ages.
7. Jesus told us that greater things we would do here on earth after He went to be with His Father.
8. Jesus came (the first time) to prepare us for His second coming.

As we look at the emblems set out before us this evening, let us consider these eight points once again :-

1. Jesus came to show us the good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
2. Jesus came to show us the power of God Almighty through signs, miracles and wonders.
3. Jesus came to die for us, so that we could again be re-united with the Father.
4. Jesus came to show us that He has power over sin & over death.
5. Jesus came and went, so that we would have access to the Holy Spirit.
6. Jesus died so that the plan for the salvation of all nations could be put into place and be implemented by His believers throughout the ages.
7. Jesus told us that greater things we would do here on earth after He went to be with His Father.
8. Jesus came (the first time) to prepare us for His second coming.

Let us pray :

Heavenly Father, we come to you tonight, by & through the name of Jesus Christ, whom we acknowledge as our Saviour, Lord & King. We take the bread and the wine, in obedience to your word, and ask that you strengthen us, to be good servants, and to truthfully fulfil the tasks you have chosen for each of us to do. We ask this prayer in Jesus' name.

AMEN

If That Isn't Love

If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy, but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God's word with power, revealing all His mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain "Jump", and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing.

If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

- Love never give up
- Love cares more for others than for oneself
- Love doesn't want what it doesn't have
- Love doesn't strut
- Love doesn't have a swelled head
- Love doesn't force itself onto others
- Love isn't always "me first",
- Love doesn't fly off the handle,
- Love doesn't keep score of the sins of others
- Love doesn't revel when others grovel
- Love takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,

- Love puts up with anything
- **Love Trust God Always**
- Love always looks for the best,
- Love never looks back, but keeps going to the end

This is the Love of God we should all share with others.

Communion 19th August 2001

Isaiah 30:15-21

This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel says: *“In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.”* You said: ‘No, we will flee on horses.’ *“Therefore you will flee!* You said, ‘We will ride off on swift horses’. *“Therefore your pursuers will be swift!. A thousand will flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five you will all flee away, till you are left like a flagstaff on a mountaintop, like a banner on a hill”.*

Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for Him!.

O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious He will be when you cry (to Him) for help! As soon as He hears, He will answer you. Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them! Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying: *“THIS IS THE WAY, WALK YE IN IT”*.

For some of us the last few weeks have been hard, with trials and tribulations we felt we could have best done without, but the Lord tells us that these trials are for our own good. *“This is the way, walk ye in it”*.

In John 14:6, Jesus said: *“I AM, the way, I AM the Truth, I AM the Life, no man comes to the Father except through Me.”*

“This is the way, walk ye in it”.

We come to the communion table to remember that Jesus followed the path laid out for Him by His Father in Heaven. Jesus was prepared to follow the Way, to walk in it, so that we may have an open door, directly into the Father’s presence. If Jesus had not been obedient to His Father’s will in this one instance:

- We would not have the right to claim eternal life.
- We would not have the right to claim forgiveness of sins.
- We would not have the right to ask the Father for the power of the Holy Spirit to dwell within us,
- We would not have the right to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us through our daily lives and struggles.
- When we take the bread, we should remember the humiliation that Jesus suffered because of the sins of the world (collectively) and our own sins individually.
- We should remember the abuse, the torment and the physical pain that Jesus was forced to suffer because of us.

“Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for Him!.”

- When we take the wine, we should remember that the tree was not cut down and ripped up, but that we are grafted into the root of Jesse. It was just pruned and grafted, so that we could become part of the new vine, bearing fruit and receiving blessings just as was promised to the Jews.
- We should remember that we have both become receivers of God’s grace. The grace which existed before the Law was given to Moses, which was never removed from the Jews – and the grace which has been bestowed freely upon us through the promises of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- We in fact are the recipients of “grace upon grace”.

That is why it so important for us to remember as we come to this table that the Lord told us *“to do so in remembrance of me”*.

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God. Let us give thanks to Jesus for His obedience and for this wonderful gift that has been bestowed upon us, as a gift from God. Let us eat and drink together.

Acts Chapter 5

In the beginning of Acts Chapter 5 we have the incident concerning Ananias & Sapphira, where this couple decided to sell a piece of land and give the proceeds to the church, as a gift from God. We know that they conspired to keep back some of the money from the sale of this land for themselves, (which they were quite entitled to do) but when asked about it by Peter, they both lied in the presence of the congregation and the Holy Spirit. As a result of this lie to the congregation, the Holy Spirit acted upon them and they both fell down dead. This event caused great fear and respect (of the Holy Spirit) to come upon the congregation and upon all those who heard about this incident.

Acts 5:12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch).*

As a result of these events, the signs & miracles, the fact that the people were in one accord, glorifying and magnifying God, many people, (both men & women) were added to the church, - not just a few, but multitudes of them. People brought out their sick relatives into the streets for Peter & the Apostles to lay hands on them, or for even their shadows to pass over them, so they could be healed.

This was not just limited to Jerusalem itself, because people from the nearby towns came with their sick folk to have them healed by the Apostles - news of the events was travelling fast throughout the region. People came to hear, people came to see, people believed and were saved. Hallelujah !!!

WHEN PEOPLE MOVE WITH UNITY OF PURPOSE - GOD MOVES IN THE MIRACULOUS !!!

Here in the church today we need to recognise this important fact. If we want to see a mighty move of God in our church, in our neighbourhood, in our city, in our region, then we have to get rid of the lies, the cliques, the deceptions and anything else, which is false in appearance before the eldership and before the Holy Spirit.

When the church in moving with unity of purpose, God moves in the miraculous. God wants us to be Holy, so He can show His glory among us. These events were clearly evident and understood by the congregation of the early church. It was also clearly evident to the Jews of the Sandhedrin - to people outside the church congregation could see that God was moving in a mighty way - it could not go unnoticed.

When God starts to move in the miraculous it gets Satan's attention and he tries to use whatever methods he has at his disposal to stop these events from happening. He tries to take the glory away from God. This is what we see commence to happen here. The Sadducees were outraged by the miracles, because they did not believe in the concept of the resurrection and this was totally against what their sect preached. They had to do something !!!

We see the same thing through the ages, when God moves somebody tries to stop it. When there is a mighty move of God, people try to cause conflict or confusion to stop God getting the glory.

Acts 5:17 *Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, 18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.*

You notice that the High Priest did not follow the Law. They did not arrest them, charge them and when found guilty place them in prison. No they just threw them into prison - without trial. This is completely against the teachings of the Old Testament, against law and order, against what the Sandhedrin stood for. Satan was now in action.

But God is in control Hallelujah !!! Even when things seem to go wrong, God has His plans and God has His ways of dealing with situations to bring the focus and the glory back to Himself. All we have to do is keep our faith and trust in Him.

Acts 5:19 *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,*

20 *Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.*

21 *And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.*

68 times the Angel of the Lord appears in the Scriptures.

Each time it is recorded, a mighty thing happens and we must not miss the significance of these events when we see them in Scripture. Here we see direct Divine intervention, to correct the Law. The Sandhedrin has placed the Apostles into prison without charge, without trial and God Almighty has released them to show the world His power is greater than that of the world and His will be done in all situations.

21 *When the high priest and those with him arrived, they called together the council and the whole body of the elders of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.*

- 22 *But when the temple police went there, they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported*
- 23 *"We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside."*
- 24 *Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were perplexed about them, wondering what might be going on.*

It says they were a little puzzled by these events - they wondered what was going on.

- 25 *Then someone arrived and announced, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"*
- 26 *Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them, but without violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.*

Now I don't know about you, but the first thing I would have wanted to know was :

- How did they get out of prison. ???
- Which guards gave them the keys to get out, or which guards took bribes to release them???
- I would have wanted an independent inquiry into this event to try to find out the truth about it.
- How did they get out of prison ?
- Did the High Priest ask this ?? This Scripture does not say so.

The Scripture records the following :

- 28 ... *"We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us."*

Here was a miracle - right before their very eyes and yet they could not see it. Even though you hit some people over the head with a 4 by 2 it still does not sink in !! They still don't believe it - They still want to go on and do things their own way.

Unfortunately we have people in the church today who are just like those of the Sandhedrin. They are not prepared to recognise the moving of God in their midst - even when they are an eyewitness to the events.

- So what is your view ?
- What are you doing to ensure that signs and miracles are happening in your church?

The Scripture says in Mark: 16:17-18 (Jesus Himself speaking) *And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."*

- Are you a true "action believer", or are you just an "observer believer"?
- Do you "do the work of the Gospel", or just "hear the work of the Gospel"?
- Only you can give a truthful answer to these questions. It is important that each person reflects upon these questions, because it will show where you are in your walk with God Almighty.

When that glorious day comes, when Jesus Christ comes back in a cloud, in triumph to collect His own, to be with Him forever, I want Him to be able to say to you: "Well done, good and faithful servant".

Australia
23/10/01

God's Strength or Man's Strength ?

We have heard many times that we should always strive to be in God's strength, so that we are able to defeat the enemy in all situations. But how do we know the difference ?

How do we know when we are operating in our own strength, instead of the strength given to us by God, through His Holy Spirit?

Possibly the best example of these two distinctly different strengths are recorded in the Old Testament, with dramatically different results.

In the book of Joshua Chapters 5 & 6 is recorded the story of the fall of Jericho.

Once when Joshua was by Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing before him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you one of us, or one of our adversaries?" (in other words : are you for us or against us)

He replied, "Neither; but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and he said to him, "What do you command your servant, my Lord?"

The commander of the army of the LORD said to Joshua, "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so. Now Jericho was shut up inside and out because of the Israelites; no one came out and no one went in. The LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have handed Jericho over to you, along with its king and soldiers. You shall march around the city, all the warriors circling the city once. This you shall do for six days, with seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets. When they make a long blast with the ram's horn, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and all the people shall charge straight ahead."

Here is a situation where a whole army (could be) **walking under the will and the strength of the Lord**. They had to be obedient to the instructions of Joshua, exactly as given to him by the Commander of the Army of the Lord. This meant they had to act without any variation, without personal interpretation, without any theological doctrine being inserted. No, just hear the Lord's instructions and do them, exactly at the time, place and direction of the Lord !!

They were to march around the wall of the city once each day, for six (6) days, in full battle armour, with priests carrying the ark of the covenant before them, playing the trumpets, but without speaking, and with no visual indication of anything happening as a result of their efforts.

This was not just a small exercise. It took time to dismantle the tent which covered the Ark of the Covenant and get it ready for transportation. The ark must be carried by special priests, as per the Scriptures.

It took time for the whole army get dressed up in full battle Armour, then to march around the city walls in the hot desert sun – a distance of about 2 miles in total.

By the time you were finished on that first day, you would have been tired, hot & sweaty and with no evidence of any change. Then you had to re-erect the covenant tent again to house the Ark of the Covenant for another day.

On the morning of the second day, Joshua would have summoned his commanders to instruct their troops to assemble for a second march. Again they would dismantle the tent which covered the Ark of the Covenant and get it ready for transportation. The ark must be carried by the special priests, as per the Scriptures. Again the army would have to get into their Armour, march around the walls in the hot desert sun, receiving taunts from the Jericho soldiers on the ramparts and the walls. Again they would march around the walls in silence, the only noise being the sound of the trumpets and the clinking of their battle armour.

By the third day, some of them might be starting to question this instruction from Joshua. Maybe there was some murmuring. "Are you sure Joshua that you actually saw this man standing before you with his sword drawn? Are you sure that he said we had to do this each day for six days? What's the reasons for this?" Sometimes when **we walk in the Strength of the Lord** we are tested by the Lord, to check our faith and our determination, to follow His instructions exactly as He has instructed us – in His timing and at His command.

By the fourth day, the soldiers on the ramparts and walls of Jericho are really laying on the humiliation to the Jews, calling them cowards, afraid to fight, they are too weak even to talk, they can't fight – only blow their trumpets. Some of the Jericho soldiers may have even suggested that their women would be more likely to fight than they are. Send out the women to fight tomorrow instead of this weak army.

It is said (jokingly) that God did not include any women in this miracle, because He knew that they could not march for six days without speaking.

On the other hand, I have heard that some men have been given the silent treatment by women for years – so maybe I should leave this alone.

On the Fifth day, the resolve of the army would be starting to be in question. "We came out here to fight, not to be made a scapegoat by the men of Jericho." Joshua would have needed to use all of his influence and leadership skills to encourage his commanders, to "have faith in God – to trust Him". The commanders needed all of their skills to relay this courage and enthusiasm to their respective army units as the army sets off once again around the walls of Jericho, to the loud taunting of the army standing on the ramparts and walls of Jericho.

On the sixth day, the army was again called to march around the walls, again with the priests carrying their long horn trumpets, marching out in front of the Ark of the Covenant, proclaiming the coming of the Lord by the sound of their trumpets, but with the army marching along in silence behind.

At the end of this sixth day, there is still no visible results of their accomplishments. It is as if the Lord has deserted them. Their faith is being severely tested.

On the morning of the seventh day, Joshua would have assembled his whole army once again, but this time he would have reminded them of the vision and of the clear instructions given to him by the Commander of the Army of the Lord.

- March around the walls seven times
- Have the priests out in front of the Ark of the Covenant carrying their trumpets, blowing them loudly.

- Have the Ark of the Covenant clearly displayed before the army as they march around the walls of Jericho, proclaiming the presence of the Lord God Almighty.
- Do not make any sound until you hear the long blast of the trumpets.
- At the completion of the seventh circle of the walls, the priests with the trumpets are to sound a long loud blast from their trumpets.
- When the army hears this sound they are to shout loudly and see God perform a miracle before their eyes.
- When the walls fall down the army is to march straight ahead into the city killing everybody in the city except Rahab the prostitute and all who are in her household.
- Do not take any of the devoted things for it will bring about your destruction.
- All the silver, gold, articles of bronze and iron are sacred and must go into His treasury.

When they had marched around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets, Joshua gave the order for the priests to give a long blast on the trumpets and the whole army gave a loud shout.

At the completion of this shout the walls collapsed outwards before their very eyes and they advanced straight forward into the city to take it for the Lord.⁴ They killed every living thing inside the city; men, women and children, all living things. Joshua sent in the spies to bring out Rahab and all who lived in her house, to honour the oaths made to her, then the army burnt the whole city. Then Joshua proclaimed an oath before the Lord: (Joshua 6:26)

“Cursed before the Lord is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho. At the cost of his first born son will he lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest will he set up its gates”.

In these trying times we live in, I wonder does the leader of the Palestinians know of this curse, for all who try to rebuild Jericho. Here is recounted a clear indication of what can happen when we walk in the Power and obedience of the Lord – miracles happen !!! In the New Testament in Mark chapter 16, Jesus Himself re-affirms this.

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Let us look at this promise from the Word because it applies to us right here and now today. If we walk in the Power of the Lord then this is what is to happen:

Go out into all of the world and proclaim the Good News to all of creation. God will do the convicting – all we have to do is the proclaiming.

1. Those who believe and are baptized will be saved.
2. Those who hear and do not believe will be condemned. God's will do the judging – not us. He decides who will be condemned – not us.
3. For believers there will be visible signs of their faith in Jesus Christ.
 - By using the name of Jesus Christ they will cast out demons.
 - They will speak in new tongues.
 - They will be able to pick up deadly snakes without fear.
 - If they drink deadly poison it will not harm them.
 - They will lay hands on the sick and in the name of Jesus Christ, the sick shall recover.

So today, the challenge to each of us is listed:

1. When was the last time you went out to proclaim the word ?
 2. When was the last time you saw somebody give their heart to the Lord and was baptized, as a result of you proclaiming the gospel ?
 3. When was the last time you called upon the name of the Lord to cast out a demonic spirit ?
 4. When was the last time that you spoke in a new tongue under the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit ?
- Remember when you speak in tongues you build up your own faith, as well as give a witness to the unbeliever.

⁴ The Walls of Jericho: During excavations of Jericho between 1930 and 1936, Professor John Garstang found one of the most incredible confirmations of the biblical record about the conquest of the Promised Land. The results were so amazing that he took precaution of preparing a written declaration of the archaeological discovery, signed by himself and two other members of his team. "As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over their ruins into the city." This fact is important because the evidence from all other archaeological digs around ancient cities in the Middle East reveal that walls of cities always fall inwards as invading armies push their way into a city. However, in the account in Joshua 6:20, we read, "the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city every man straight ahead, and they took the city." Only the supernatural power of God could have caused the walls to fall outward as described in Joshua's account of the conquest of Jericho (John Garstang, Joshua Judges, [London: Constable, 1931]).

5. Not many of us can claim that they pick up deadly snakes without fear – but the Lord says that we should be able to.
6. Not many of us have drank deadly poison without effect. Again the Word says that it will happen.
7. When was the last time you laid hands on somebody and in the name of Jesus Christ you prayed for the person to be healed of their sickness?

Now I don't advocate that you go out into the street looking for snakes or deadly poisons, but the other things listed above should be regularly on our check list. If they are not then how can we say that we are believers.

IN VERSE 17 JESUS CLEARLY STATES THAT THESE ARE THE SIGNS OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE. So this morning I want each to examine their hearts to see if we can claim to be believers or not. In James 1:22 it says *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

Are you a doer of God's word – or just a hearer of God's word. Are you positive of your claim to be a believer – or are you deceiving yourselves ?

Remember satan deceives, not God Almighty. We have to audit our Christian performance, to make sure we are walking in the Power of God, not just in our own strength. We have to be 100 percent assured that we are in fact believers by being able to show our works – not just hearers of the Word and not doing anything about it.

We must be pro-active Christians – not "armchair Christians". This is a wake up call this morning. Let us have a few moments to examine our hearts and see how they line up with God's Word. If they do, then rejoice and do more – If they don't only you can change that by a conscious decision to be more active in your Christian walk.

Let us pray.

John Chapter 17

Bible students are told that John Chapter 17 is the longest recorded prayer in the Bible that Jesus prayed -and it is, and many look at this passage of Scripture as a prayer and nothing else.

However, this passage of Scripture has some other interesting aspects which needs careful study, to realise that this passage of Scripture is also a wonderful passage of teaching Scripture, as well as a prayer.

Jesus opens up this Chapter, not with something new, but with a continuation of the previous passages in Chapter 16. In Chapter 16, Jesus has been revealing to the disciples the things that have happened to them during the time that they have been with Him, until finally the penny drops and they recognise that Jesus actually comes from God Almighty. (Ref. J. 16:29-31)

(John 16:29 NIV) *Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech.*

(John 16:30 NIV) *Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."*

(John 16:31 NIV) *"You believe at last!" Jesus answered.*

Even though Jesus is pleased that the "penny has finally dropped" He has to warn them that things are not going to get any easier for them in the future.

(John 17:1 NIV) *After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.*

The "time" which was defined and decided even before the world was created has finally arrived. The "time" foretold by the prophets (in particular by Isaiah) has come, when God the Father is to Glorify the Son, so there will be no doubt in the minds of anybody, those alive at that time, those already dead, and those who are yet to be born. Everybody will know who Jesus Christ really is.

Once the Son has been glorified by the Father, then the Father can be glorified in return by the Son, by being obedient to the Father.

(John 17:2 NIV) *For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.*

Jesus makes a confirmation that He has fulfilled the task which was given to Him by the Father, to give eternal life the those disciples given to Him (by the Father). Jesus then goes on to make an extraordinary statement in verse 3 - Jesus gives His definition of "eternal life". If I asked you here today to give your definition of Eternal Life, I am sure that I would receive many different concepts of what the meaning of "eternal life" is for you. But let us look at the definition that Jesus gives :

(John 17:3 NIV) *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

This is "eternal" (perpetual - forever) "life" (being alive). To be alive forever means : that we must know that God the Father is the only true God and that Jesus Christ was sent by God Almighty.

To believe and know these things (in our hearts) is the definition which Jesus Christ gives for eternal life. (no more - no less)

(John 17:4 NIV) *I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.*

Now hang on a minute: Jesus is saying these things in a prayer to the Father,

- before He has gone to the cross,
- before He has been crucified,
- before He has died,
- before he went down into Hell and preached to the dead,
- before he rose from the dead,
- before He ascended into heaven.

How could He say these things now ? We ask these questions because we assume the work Jesus was given to do included the cross. But we do not understand the work that Jesus was sent to do. Jesus defines it Himself in verse 2 above : *that He might give eternal life to all those you have given him.* This is how Jesus glorified the Father on earth, by doing the work that the Father had given Him to do.

(John 17:8 NIV) *For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.*

He had taken this mixed rabble of confused men and bound them into a unit, all ready to do the Work of the Father. Bible students will know this to be true, as they examine the character of each of the disciples. They will know that without Jesus being present there would have been bloodshed as Simon (the zealot) would have attacked Matthew (the tax collector - a pawn of the Romans)

Without the presence of Jesus Christ in their midst and the power of the Holy Spirit operating in and through their lives, there would be no unity at all. Now it is time for the Father to glorify the Son, as confirmation of this completed work through the cross - to fulfil the prophecies given by the prophets : *"The hour has come"*

We know that Jesus was obedient to His Father, that he did go to the cross and that He did rise again and that he has glorified His Father, (by His obedience) and that the Father has glorified the Son, as the Son now sits at the right hand of God the Father, in heaven acting as our permanent intercessor, pleading on our behalf. But I would like to draw your attention back to the basic point I identified earlier.

- **Jesus completed the work He was given by the Father, before the cross.**
- **The Father glorified the Son, through the cross,** then by raising Him up into Heaven, to prove His sovereignty over death.

We all know that Jesus commanded each of us individually (and collectively) *"to go into all the world & preach the Gospel"*. But there is another Scripture which says (John 15:16 NIV) You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Jesus has commanded us to go and bear fruit and our fruit must last. That is the work He has charged each and everyone of us to do. Before we can commence to bear fruit, we must first be planted.

- Into what must we be planted?
- Is it into the world?
- Is it into a new area of the city without a church?
- Is it to start some new church activity?

No! I believe we first must be planted squarely into God's Word, so that we have the right type of fertile (spiritual soil) in which to grow and develop strong roots and a strong foundation to withstand the trials and temptations which will occur when each of us goes out into the world to put into practise what we have learnt in the Word.

Before the Disciples were able to *"go out into the world & preach the Gospel"* they had to re-learn all the teachings of the Old Testament, with the new understanding which Jesus Christ was able to explain to them, plus additional revelations through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Light of God

In the beginning, in (Gen 1:3 NRSV) ***Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.***

➤ (Light the first candle)

One of the first acts of God Almighty in creation was to put His light into the world, to separate His world from darkness, to let all of creation know, in a physical way, that God Almighty was present as a real and visible force, - a force of mercy and compassion, but also of judgement.

When Moses was challenged by God, he was drawn aside to see the bush which was burning, but not consumed. He was drawn to a "different kind of light" – a light which was "in the world – but not of this world".

➤ (Light the second candle)

When God Almighty told him to "take off his shoes, for where you walk is Holy Ground", it confirmed that he was in the presence of the "Eternal Light". This encounter by Moses with the eternal light of God Almighty, changed his life forever. God Almighty talked to Moses from within the Light of the burning bush and Moses was not destroyed. Despite the hardships, despite his claimed physical and spiritual limitations, he followed and obeyed his God for the remainder of his life, for the next 40 years.

When Moses went back into Egypt he was told by God that God Himself would show him how to convince the Pharaoh to "Let My people go". We know that God Almighty commanded Moses to perform 10 miracles, as evidence that God Almighty was in control of all of the earth, not the Pharaoh, not Dagon, not people, but God Almighty Himself.

In Ex. 10:21 ***And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.***

Ex. 10:22 ***And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days:***

Ex. 10:23 ***They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.***

Despite the fact that darkness covered the whole of the nation of Egypt, a darkness which was so oppressive that the Egyptians could not see their hands in front of their faces, they remained in their beds for three days, God Almighty provided ***"Light in the dwellings of all the children of Israel"***.

(Light the third candle)

At the completion of this miracle, the Pharaoh told Moses to go and serve the Lord.

We know that Jesus is the light, because He said in John 8:12: ... ***"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."***

(Light the fourth candle)

When God puts His light into your heart you are required to shine, to proclaim His light to all around you, to do the things that Jesus wants you to do, (when He tells you to do it) so that His light shines in you and through you. We are to proclaim the sovereignty of God Almighty over the spirit of darkness, in our lives and on this earth and show that with His light in our lives ***"you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you"***. The light of God is a very important thing. However, we see that as people continue in their spiritual walk with the Lord one of two things happen:

➤ The light which was very bright at salvation, when we first accepted the Lord Jesus Christ into our lives as our own personal saviour, continues to glow bright and we are able to perform mighty miracles as was stated in:

Mark 16:15 ***And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.***

Mark 16:16 ***The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.***

Mark 16:17 ***And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues;***

Mark 16:18 ***They will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover".***

➤ Anybody who sees these type of Christians have no problem identifying them as "practising Christians". Their eyes beam like small search lights and their smile is nearly as big as the Grand Canyon. Yes, you have no trouble identifying these people as Christians.

- However, “older, more refined, so-called maturer Christians” thinks these people are “over the top” – they are fanatics, they need to quieten down a little bit, otherwise we might give the “Christian church” a bad name.
- You see, their lights are starting to dim a little. Less shine in their eyes, not so many miracles now days.

(Put a cover over the light)

- Of course they still claim that they are saved, because on such a such day they made a commitment to follow Jesus Christ, to receive the free gift that He offered to them – the gift of everlasting life.
- Because the Word of God is unchanging, they are saved. God does not lie, He has extended His love to them, even while they were still sinners.
- But let us look at the scripture in Mark 16 again. If they truly believed they are saved, they would want to be obedient to His Word and do the things which Jesus Christ said was possible for all believers.
- So we have the first major differences :
 - a) One group are saved and doing the work of salvation, praying for people, etc, and seeing the direct result of their prayers, through the miracles of healing which the Holy Spirit has effected as a result of their requests to the Father, through Jesus Christ.
 - b) The second group may attend the same church, may attend the same prayer meetings, or Bible studies, but without the same results. Their prayers are not being answered all the time, because they have allowed a blockage to come between themselves and God. Satan has been able to infiltrate their spirits and reduce their spiritual effectiveness. Satan knows he cannot remove their salvation, but he can make them useless for God, so that they don’t interrupt his attempts to bring dishonour to God’s kingdom here on earth.
 - c) The third group have let the light grow so dim that you need a torch to find it. They don’t come to church regularly, they don’t read their bibles for themselves, they come to church just to get topped up and hope that a 40 minute sermon once a week will feed them for a whole week until next Sunday. Well I like my food and I know that my physical body cannot live for a whole week without food and still be functioning the same as if I had three solid meals each day. No! I would be feeling very severe hunger pains.

(Snuff out one of the candles)

- d) The same is true for these third group of Christians. They are spiritually starving and are unable to function at a proper spiritual level. Whenever trials and tribulations come upon them they are on the phone to the pastor for help, or prayer, yet in most cases they could overcome this situation themselves if they just followed the basic guidelines which have been set out in the Scriptures.
- e) Read the Word each day, to gain understanding of God and what His plan is for your life.
- f) Prayer regularly to God, asking forgiveness for the wrongs you have done and for spiritual strength to withstand the devil when this trial comes again.
- g) Pray for the continual infilling of the Holy Spirit and for the outflowing of His Spirit through you as you minister to others, in whichever situation the Lord leads you.

Today we are faced with a real challenge: Which light are you?

1. Do people know you are a Christian by your speech, your actions and the miracles which follow those who believe ?
2. Do people know that you go to church, that you are a “nice person” but that you don’t seem to progress to spiritual maturity, because the light which used to burn within your soul has started to shine dimly?
3. Or are you the Christian who has to take a torch to search for the light which you know used to be burning inside your soul?

I don’t want to know the answer to these questions – but you have to deal with them and bring your answer before the Lord, so He can confirm it. The good news is that we all can be Christians who are “on fire for Christ”. All we have to do is pray a prayer of confession, which goes something like this: ***“Oh heavenly Father, I come before your throne through the cleansing blood of your Son, Jesus Christ and I confess that I want to become a Christian believer who is on fire for you – just like is described in the Gospel of Mark. Pour out your Holy Spirit to clean and restore me, so that I may serve you with a clean heart and a perfect submissive will. Oh Father I ask that you retune me spiritual ears so that I can recognise the prompting of your Holy Spirit and the boldness to do your will, without any***

consideration of the consequences. I ask this so that your Kingdom may reign in my heart and on this earth, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

(Relight the candles again)

6/09/01

The Lord Your God

I have looked over this nation for the past 50 years and seen major changes in the way we approach God Almighty. When I first attended school it was always the practice to come to the assembly area, pray to the Lord for our families, our nation, our teachers and that we would be able to learn what was taught in the classroom that day. The beginning of each day was first focused onto God Almighty and Jesus Christ in particular.

At the completion of these prayers, either conducted by a teacher, the school captain or one of the prefects, we would sing the national anthem and then move into our classrooms for the day's lectures.

Back then, just 50 years ago, there was a community respect for God Almighty and He had a place of prominence in our daily lives. You did not start any meals without saying "grace" thanking the Lord for the provision of the food and asking a blessing upon the hands of the ones who prepared it.

Back then, children respected their father and mother, their teachers and people in authority and the nation was blessed with prosperity beyond belief.

In Australia it was said that were living on the sheep's back because of the opportunities for our nation to market its agricultural products overseas and to give everybody an opportunity for employment. Unemployment was a thing not considered a problem. If you wanted to work there was plenty of opportunities to find a job.

Back then, just 50 years ago, it was quite common for Sunday school pupils to be able to recite the 10 Commandments from Exodus chapter 20, because these were the standards of living that everybody accepted and tried to live by.

Exo 20:2 ***I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;***

Exo 20:3 ***you shall have no other gods before me.***

The Land of Egypt is accepted as the geographical land for the Jews, but also alludes to the "land of sin" and the slavery to sin. God Almighty makes it very clear in His next statement: "You shall have no other gods before me!"

But now, in 2001, with our sensitivity not to vilify any particular race, ethnic group, sexual persuasion, or type of behavior, we are lifting other things up to take the place rightfully reserved before the beginning of creation for the Lord God Almighty.

The God of Grace

Many people have been told in Sunday school and from the pulpits that the Old Testament is the "Book of Law" and the New Testament is the "Book of Grace", well I want to tell you that my God is a God of Grace and that His grace started right back in the Garden of Eden and has been available to us all ever since.

(Gen 2:15 NRSV) ***The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.***

(Gen 2:16 NRSV) ***And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden;***

(Gen 2:17 NRSV) ***but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."***

When God gave Adam the commandment in the Garden "not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil", the first law was set by God and the punishment for breaking that law was death. This law was given to Adam before Eve was created, so Adam was quite aware of his responsibility to God even when he was the only person alive on the earth.

If the Old Testament was a "Book of Law" only, then God would have killed him when Adam broke this first law. But God did not kill him physically, only spiritually – God allowed Adam to live out his days, have children and see

them grow up and procreate the earth. God extended grace to Adam and Eve. “Yet while we were still sinners God’s grace was available to us”

When Cain killed Abel, the Lord could have killed him – but no, He allowed him to live out his days. God gave grace to Cain – he was allowed to live – but his sin and the sin of his father Adam continued to grow and multiply upon the face of the earth. In Genesis chapter 6 we see the predicament facing God and He looked down upon His creation.

(Gen 6:5 NRSV) ***The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually.***

(Gen 6:6 NRSV) ***And the LORD was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.***

(Gen 6:7 NRSV) ***So the LORD said, "I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created--people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."***

(Gen 6:8 NRSV) ***But Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD.***

God Almighty looked down upon His creation and said to Himself: *“I have made a mistake – look at all the sin of these people. That is all they think about. I wish I had not made them at all – I will blot them out from the face of the earth”.*

But then He looked again and he saw Noah – a man whose mind was set upon God, a man whose desire was to serve Him, even in the midst of all this sin and turmoil. A man who was pleading with the people around him to stop their evil and turn back to God and worship only God Almighty – not gods made by man.

In Genesis chapter 6 verse 8 it says : ***“But Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD.”*** In Genesis chapter 6 verse 9 it says: ***“Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.”***

Here was a man that was trying with all his heart to follow God’s laws, to do good, instead of evil. He was blameless among his people. However, he was not blameless before God, because the inherited sin of Adam was still upon him.

(Gen 6:11 NRSV) ***Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence.***

(Gen 6:12 NRSV) ***And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth.***

(Gen 6:13 NRSV) ***And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth."***

When God Almighty decided to remove all the sinful people from the face of the earth, if He had been following the concepts of the Old Testament being a Book of the Law he would have had to remove Noah and his family along with the rest because they also were sinners before Him, because of Adam’s sin upon their lives.

God looked down upon Noah and said to Himself : ***“I can save this one, because he is blameless among his own people, he has not committed any sin himself. I can start again with him and his family. I will not destroy them all. I will extend My grace to this few so that My creation will continue and my name shall be exalted over this earth.”***

When God Almighty decided to extend His grace to Noah and his family, the plan of salvation was sealed. God Almighty knew that He must offer His Son to save Noah and his family from physical and eternal death . For those people who study numerology of the Bible it is interesting to look deeper at the text.

- The number seven (7) we know is God’s perfect number.
- The number six (6) is less than perfect and symbolises sin upon the earth. That is why the symbol of satan is “666”, the number 6 reinforced three times by God so that there is no mistake about its meaning.
- The number eight (8) we know is the beginning again number, when things start all over. The eighth day, is the beginning again of the next week, the eight note is the beginning again of the seven prime notes in music.

We know that through Jesus Christ we have salvation, we are “born again”, we start all over because our sin is washed away, we become new (in Christ). This is why the symbolic number for Christ is “888” – beginning again – reinforced three times so that we don’t miss its significance.

In Gen. 6:8 we have both numbers coming into play. The “6” signifying “sin” and the “8” signifying the “new beginning”. It is no accident that this verse is so numbered.

He is a Light

By Rani Camm

22/9/01

Our God is a living God,
A God who is a God of peace, A God of justice,
A God who is loving and caring for all mankind,
A God who loves us so much, that He gave His one and only Son
for our sins.

Our God does not teach us to kill or maim in His name
Our God is a God of goodness and only goodness comes from
Him,
Without Him we are nothing at all,
What we are, and what we will become, are because of Him.
Today the whole world is coming together to worship Him,
No matter what the evil one does, we will not be conquered,
The one who attacks and hides, can kill people, he can destroy
buildings,
But he cannot destroy the souls of the people who put their trust in
God Almighty,
He cannot put out the light which burns so brightly within our
hearts and minds,
Let us take up the battle cry and proclaim the victory of Jesus on
the cross,
“Father forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing”
They thought they would destroy a nation, a people,
But you know that persecution causes our faith to become
stronger,
And now we go out to fight the darkness with the power of your
light.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon the righteous, so that righteousness shall prevail in this time and your name will be victorious on the earth.

God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.
[1 John 1:5]

21/10/01

Proclaim Me before the People

This morning the theme of the message for communion was : *“Fear not, stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord”*. The message that came forth through the Holy Spirit was *“Its Time” – “Now is the Time”*.

The scripture says in : Matt. 10 :32-33 *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*

“Now is the time” to confess the name of Jesus Christ before men and women here on the earth, especially here in Coffs Harbour, where many people are cringing in fear, due to their circumstances and what they perceive is happening around them.

We know that the love of God casts out all fear, but unless we tell the people and show this truth to them in our lives, they will never believe it.

- When we partake of these elements we are proclaiming Jesus Christ.
- We are proclaiming His death on the cross for us, His sacrifice for our individual and collective sins.
- Jesus Christ says “sorry” to the Father in Heaven for our sins and for our failures.
- When we partake of these elements we are proclaiming His resurrection, His victory over satan, over sin and over death.
- We are proclaiming that Jesus is the first-fruits of the resurrection and that through His blood and through His sacrifice, we also can become partakers in the promise of a resurrected life.
- We are proclaiming that we are born-again, made new, completely clean – witnesses of the new covenant in Christ Jesus.

So today let us take up the elements, the symbols of eternity with Jesus Christ and eat and drink together, let us proclaim our faith, believing in the promises of His word, that we will see Him face to face, and dwell in His house forever.

Shall We Kill the Innocent with the Guilty?

God Almighty has been concerned throughout all the His Creation and His Word with the protection of the innocent, whenever He wanted to chastise or punish the guilty. Today I want to challenge you all in this regard also.

When God Almighty looked down upon the earth and saw that it was corrupt, He wanted to demolish the earth and all that He had created and start again. But He looked down and saw a righteous man – Noah. God could not destroy Noah along with the unrighteous and He had to put a plan into place to protect him from death. God could not destroy the righteous with the unrighteous.

When God sent down the angels to destroy Sodom & Gomorrah, Abraham pleaded with the Angel of the Lord and said : *“If there is but five righteous people in this city, will you still destroy it?”* The Angel of the Lord replied: *“For five righteous persons I will not destroy the city.”* God could not destroy the righteous with the unrighteous.

The angels only found four righteous people within the city, but even then **God Almighty would not allow four righteous people to be killed along with the unrighteous people** He was going to destroy. The angels had to extract Lot, his wife and two daughters from the city because they were righteous, before they could destroy the city.

From these examples in God's Word we see that God Almighty puts great emphasis on protecting the innocent and the righteous in whatever plans He wants to put into place.

The Scripture says in Matthew Chapter 10:32-33 that if we proclaim God's Word to the nations, Jesus will proclaim our names before the Father in Heaven. If we do not proclaim His name before the nations, then our names will not be proclaimed before the Father in Heaven.

The Scripture in Matthew Chapter 7:1-2 also tells us to judge not – for whatever measure we use to judge others, will be the same measure that God Almighty will use to judge us - which is an awesome thought.

In America we have been told that people are very proud of the slogan which is written on their coins : **“IN GOD WE TRUST”**.

Today I want to have a look at that statement and what it really means to you, as individuals and as a nation. If you “trust in God”, which God is it you trust in?

- Is it the God Almighty?
- who made the heaven and the earth,
- who will judge the quick and the dead,
- who will come upon you like a thief in the night, when you are least expecting it and
- who you shall see face to face.
- He will judge you and you will live with Him for eternity if your name is found in the Lamb's book of life.

Is this the God you believe in? If so, then you must have a Jesus Christ experience in your lives, otherwise you don't believe in Him – you have just heard about Him – a totally different thing altogether.

I know about Queen Elizabeth, who rules over the UK – but I have never had an encounter with Her – I have never spoken to her face-to-face. Therefore I can say I know about her but I cannot say I know her.

2 Thess. 1:5-12:

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, and is intended to make you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering. For it is indeed just of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to the afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

These will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at on that day among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

To this end we always pray for you, asking that our God will make you worthy of his call and will fulfill by his power every good resolve and work of faith, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you **“Trust in God”** then you will let him put into place His plans for judgement and vengeance on the people who did the 11th September atrocities. Why ? because the Word says : **“vengeance is mine sayeth the Lord”**

Isa 59:17 **For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.**

Isa 59:18 **According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense.**

Do you want to be judged by God Almighty for being a disobedient nation ? Remember, it does not matter how great you think you are as a nation, if you disobey God Almighty you shall surely pay the penalty as a nation – even though as individual people you are saved by grace – unless you get down on your faces and repent.

9th November 2001

Matthew Chapter 28 Verse 5

"But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified."

Matt. 28:18-20 is referred to as the great commission to the church, spoken by Jesus Christ Himself.

"And Jesus came and spoke unto them saying: ALL POWER, is given unto Me, in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. AMEN."

Where did Jesus give this commandment ? (In Israel)

To whom did Jesus give this commandment ? (His Jewish followers)

In 2 Cor. 5:20 Paul said that we have to be ambassadors for Christ, to be His representatives, to be examples for Him, teaching others by the example of Christ being manifested in and through us.

Jesus came into the world to save all those who were oppressed by the devil, to heal the sick, to make the lame to walk, to make the blind to see (both physically and spiritually) to set the captives of sin free.

- Jesus was born of Jewish parents, He was born of the root of Jesse.
- He was circumcised on the 8th day, according to the law of Moses.
- He studied the Bible and obtained his bar-mitzvah in Jerusalem, and the scribes and Pharisees were amazed at His knowledge and understanding of the Holy Scriptures.
- Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan, to fulfil all righteousness by John the Baptist.
- He received the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit, which came down from Heaven and rested upon His shoulder in the image of a dove.
- He commenced His ministry at age 30, in accordance with Numbers 4:3, as recorded in Luke 4:14-18.
- And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of Him through all the region. And HE TAUGHT IN THE SYNAGOGUES, being glorified of all."
- Where did He teach ? In the Baptist Church ? In the Catholic Church ? NO !! He taught in the Synagogue, teaching Jews about the Law, and about Grace.

"And he came to Nazareth where he was brought up; and as was His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the Prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the Book, He found the place where it is written (Is. 61:1-2) (He probably read the scroll just like the cantor did when we visited the synagogue here in Jerusalem.)

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me, to preach good news to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Jesus came to do these things - not to break the ties which existed between the Jews and the Gentiles, but to make a tie, or bridge, between God Almighty and all of mankind.

In John 15:1-14 Jesus said that He is the vine and we are the branches, that we (the Gentiles) are grafted into the vine. When Jesus quoted this passages He was in fact referring to Ps. 80:8. ***"Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the Heathen and planted it"*** Jesus was reminding the listeners that the vine is the chosen nation of God, the nation of Israel.

This is also confirmed in Is. 5:7. ***"For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant: and He looked for judgement, but behold oppression, for righteousness, but behold a cry,"***

- We are grafted into the vine through Jesus Christ.
- We are sustained by the food from the vine, from the roots of the vine (the Word of God).
- When you are grafted into a vine, you grow alongside the part of the plant which already exists.
- We do not replace the part which is already growing. (refer Rom.11:1-5)

Only parts which do not bear fruit are cut off and burned. This applies to the whole plant - the original part and the part which is grafted in.

In this seminar we have been challenged to question our traditional teachings, to look at the Scriptures through the eyes of the men who wrote them, understanding the time, place, culture and religious background of the people who were being addressed.

Jesus said that he did not come to abolish the Law. Therefore we should not try to forget the divine wisdom, teaching and example of the Law.

Paul has told us that God HAS NOT CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE, WHICH HE KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING. EVEN SO THEN AT THIS PRESENT TIME THERE IS A REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE.

We, as Christians have a responsibility to preach and teach the Scriptures AS IT IS WRITTEN - not according to biased traditionalism, sent down to us through the hatred of the ages, sometimes in direct contradiction to God's Holy Word.

As we complete this seminar let us resolve to learn to examine God's Word more closely, pray for the Holy Spirit to LEAD US INTO ALL TRUTH, as is promised in the Scriptures and fulfil the commandments of Jesus Christ to the maximum limit. Jesus said that ***YE SHALL BE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.***

As Christians, we have to learn to educate others to love the Jews as our brothers, because Jesus commanded us to do so. We can start this reconciliation through our own examples.
Let us sing TWO songs together, if you know them.

WE WILL WALK ALL TOGETHER, WE WILL WALK SIDE BY SIDE,
WE WILL WALK ALL TOGETHER, WE WILL WALK SIDE BY SIDE,
AND TOGETHER ALL UNITY WILL ONE DAY BE RESTORED.
AND THEY'LL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE BY OUR LOVE,
YES THEY'LL KNOW THAT WE ARE CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE.
ALL PRAISE TO THE FATHER, FROM WHOM BLESSINGS FLOW,
AND ALL PRAISE TO CHRIST JESUS, HIS ONLY SON,
AND ALL PRAISE TO THE SPIRIT, WHO MAKES US ONE,
AND THEY'LL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE BY OUR LOVE,
YES THEY'LL KNOW THAT WE ARE CHRISTIANS BY OUR LOVE.

PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM, PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM,
PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM SHALL LIVE IN PEACE. (x2)

SHALOM, SHALOM, SHALOM, SHALOM, SHALOM, SHALOM,
SHALOO, SHALOM, YERUSALAYEM. (x2)